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A PLAIN

AND

SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF

BAPTISM.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

PERFECT unanimity of sentiment cannot be found in the happiest and best regulated families on earth; and it is well known that our wisest statesmen and purest patriots often differ in their views of some points, even of constitutional law. It should not therefore be any matter of surprise, if amongst the multitudes of those who compose the Christian Church, there should be some diversity of sentiment in relation to some matters of faith and practice. And this should not break the bonds of union which should ever bind them together as members of the same household of faith, for the apostle does not say, Grace be with all them who *think* alike, but "Grace be with all them that *love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*" Cordially agreeing in essential matters, we may then with perfect integrity of religious character, in other things harmoniously and safely agree to differ. In relation to the proper subjects and mode of Baptism, many persons have given their

views. This little unpretending book presents mine.

"Hanc veniam, petimusque damusque, vicissim."

I am now an old disciple; my locks are silvery. Full threescore years have rolled over my head, and more than thirty-six years have I preached with some success, I hope, the glorious gospel of the blessed God. My sun of life must soon go down; even now the shades of evening are lengthening around me. With much love for my brethren who in the matter of baptism differ from me, (and yet with many of whom I have often taken sweet counsel, and gone to the house of God in company,) I now hand over to my family, to the church of God and the world at large, in this little book, my testimony in favour of doctrines and practices which I verily believe to be both scriptural and true; and all I request of the reader is, with a prayerful spirit to read, examine and compare; bringing everything to the test of God's blessed word, withal remembering, that as neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, even so neither will water baptism, however administered, avail anything without the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

A

PLAIN AND SCRIPTURAL

VIEW OF BAPTISM.

THE word *Baptism* is a Greek word in an English dress. It has not been translated, because, having a variety of significations, no single term in our language could be found sufficiently comprehensive. Like the Latin word *conversation*, and the Greek word *angel*, and the Hebrew word *amen*, the precise meaning of which, in any given place, is to be ascertained by the connection in which it is there found.

Water baptism is a sacrament or holy ordinance instituted by Christ. It is a lively emblem of spiritual baptism. It is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace; and implies that the subject is a sinful creature,

needing to be cleansed, and that this cleansing is to be accomplished only by the application of the atoning blood of Christ, and the purifying influences of the divine Spirit. Two points will here be considered; the proper *subjects* of baptism, and the proper *mode*.

I. The proper subjects of baptism. Unquestionably *adults*, upon a credible profession of their faith in Christ, having never been previously baptized, are proper subjects of this ordinance. Thus far we agree precisely with those who hold to what is usually denominated "believers' baptism." But we further believe, that the *infants* of such as are members of the visible church are also to be baptized. Our argument is this: Infant membership formed a part of the original constitution of the visible Church of God. Infant membership has never been abolished, and therefore infants have a right to membership still. Baptism has taken the place of the ancient initiatory or recognizing ordinance, and therefore infants are to be baptized. This is the ground which we take. Each position is susceptible of clear scriptural demonstra-

tion, and therefore must "stand the test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time."

First. Infant membership formed a part of the original constitution of the church of God on earth. When was this church constituted, and by whom? Not by John the Baptist, nor any in his day; for who can suppose that God had no church on earth for four thousand years? And does not Stephen speak of the "Church in the wilderness?" Acts vii. 38. Indeed, we have reason to believe that there was a church organization from the period when the first promise was made to the human family, touching the "seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head;" and from what is said about the connection which existed in the earliest ages of the world, between parents and their children, it would seem that they were linked together by some bonds and ordinances of a sacred character, even from the time of Adam. Hence, not only were Noah and his wife included in the ark, but also all the members of their family, and none else. Moreover, Moses, speaking of events immediately subsequent

to the deluge, makes this remarkable record: "And God blessed Noah *and his sons.*" And again, "God spake unto Noah, *and his sons with him*, saying, And I, behold I establish my covenant with you, and *your seed after you.*"* So that even at this early period,

* "There is a very *rational* and *just* sense in which God may be said to establish his covenant with infants; for the Scripture expressly says, (Gen. ix. 9—13,) that he established his covenant even with the cattle and the fowl, solemnly engaging no more to drown them by a flood. Is there anything strange then, or unreasonable in the belief that God has established a covenant with infants, solemnly engaging *to pour out his Spirit and blessing upon them?* or that the evils they suffer in consequence of Adam's sin, shall be removed and amply compensated through the righteousness of Christ? But if there is a rational and just sense in which God may establish his covenant with infants, there is the highest reason to presume that he *has* actually *done it*, and that they *are* taken into his covenant; for if he graciously condescended to establish his covenant with the brute creation, promising no more to drown them by a deluge of waters; and appointed a standing *token* or *memorial* of this his covenant with them, as well as with man, *viz.* the bow in the clouds; much more may we hope that he *has established his covenant with*

there was a covenant, and this covenant embraced *parents and their children*, and *their seed after them*. But for a more full and distinct development of the principle, we must refer to the time of Abraham. Him God separated from the heathen; with him entered into a covenant, appointing circumcision as a sign and seal of that covenant. The record of this memorable transaction is in these words: "And the Lord said unto Abraham, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations; and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee, and I will be *their God*. And this is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee—every man-child among you shall be circumcised. Gen.

infants also, promising to deliver them from the fatal consequences of the fall; and that he hath appointed a standing token or sign of this his covenant with them, to perpetuate the knowledge and remembrance of it in the Church."

xvii. (Read the whole chapter.) In accordance with the provisions of this gracious covenant, Abraham proceeded forthwith to bring his family into a state of visible church relationship with God, making use of circumcision as the initiatory rite then prescribed. And when Isaac was subsequently born, he also, when eight days old, was added as a member of the same visible church, by the application of the same appointed rite. And thus was the family of Abraham separated from the world; and by a formal *religious act*, taken into covenant or church relationship with God. This (we insist upon it) was not a *national* affair, as some would have us to believe, for the apostle referring to this very thing says, "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Gal. iii. 8, 9. Mark the language; "preached the gospel!" This proves that the blessings contemplated were of a *spiritual* and not of a *national* character. National it could not be, for the affair

had reference to but one family, and the posterity of Abraham had no national existence, and no civil institutions for many ages after; besides, the very solemnity with which the transaction was introduced shows its *purely religious character*. The record is this: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect." Then follow the words, "And I will make my covenant between me and thee." And further, that this was *not* a national affair, appears, if possible, with still clearer evidence, from this language found in the seventh verse: "And I will *establish* my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee." The word *establish*, here used, shows that this covenant was but the *renewal* of a previous one; the one, for example, made with Noah, already referred to, and which has never been called a national one; and I would here remark, that as the covenant with Noah embraced children, as well as the covenant with Abraham, here we have additional evidence of the fact, that

infant membership did form a part of the original constitution of the church of God on earth.

The Mosaic dispensation, which was established four hundred and thirty years after the covenant with Abraham, furnishes an example of another covenant, besides that of circumcision, into which infants were taken, by which, being circumcised, they became members of the Jewish church by a new, and it may be a peculiar bond. You will find it in Deut. xxix. 9—15. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel; *your little ones*, &c., that *thou shouldst enter into covenant* with the Lord thy God, *and into his oath* which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; that he may *establish thee* today *for a people unto himself*, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," &c. And that this was no unmeaning ceremony, as it respected the infant portion of that peo-

ple, Ezekiel proves, when he says: (chap. xvi. 1—3, 20, 21,) "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto Jerusalem . . . . thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters *whom thou hast borne unto me*, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them, to be devoured; . . . . thou hast slain *my children* and delivered them, to cause them to pass through the fire for them."

The reader need not be told that God expressly required that every first-born male should be consecrated to him, and be called holy unto the Lord, (Luke ii. 22, 23; Exod. xiii. 2; xxii. 29; xxxiv. 19.) Our Lord himself, when an infant, was brought into the temple and solemnly devoted to God. Among the Jews, every child on the day of its circumcision was called *Chatan*, because it was then *considered as espoused to God* and *united to his people.* (Schind. Lex. Pent. page 677.) Hence it is evident Jewish infants, during the Mosaic dispensation, as well as previously, in consequence of their dedication to God, and of their being received into his covenant, were, in an especial manner, *God's children*—

his property; that is, they were his in a sense in which the infants of the idolatrous and uncircumcised gentiles were not. Unless it be so, there is no meaning in these passages whatever. The bearing of this argument cannot be mistaken. Did God take the infants of his people into covenant with himself under Abraham and Moses; and command, as a standing token of it, that the seal of the covenant should be solemnly affixed to them? But under the dispensation of Jesus his Son, has he made no such manifestation of his regard to them—admitted them into *no covenant*, nor appointed any token that he receives them as *his children*, and that he will be to them a God? How improbable; nay, how uncomfortable the thought! Thanks to his mercy, we can with confidence say that it is not so; accordingly our

Second affirmation is this: Infant membership thus originally instituted, and continued under and through the Levitical economy, has never been abolished. Abolished! Where is the abolishing act? It cannot be found in all the Bible! Abolished! It cannot be, for

the covenant which embraced infants was expressly declared to be an everlasting covenant. Abolished! It could not be, for it had direct reference to gospel times; and was designed, as was expressly stated, to embrace in its gracious provisions believers of every place and every age. This the apostle himself positively affirms. I give you his very words: "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be father of them that believe, *though they be not circumcised;*" that is, though it be in a remote age, when circumcision as a religious rite shall no longer exist. But some tell us, that infant membership formed a part of the old dispensation; that it was altogether a *Jewish affair;* and that the old Jewish dispensation having passed away, infant membership has passed away with it. But this cannot be; because infant membership was instituted long *before* the Jews, as a nation, had any existence at all. Indeed, as it would seem to make this matter perfectly clear, the apostle expressly

tells us that the *covenant* made with Abraham, and *the law* given by Moses, were two entirely distinct things; and that they had no such connection, that the one could not disannul the other. Hear his own words, Gal. iii. 17: "And this I say, that the covenant, which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of God of none effect." Now this is precisely to the point, and is perfectly conclusive; for if the coming in of the Levitical or Jewish dispensation could not disannul that covenant which embraced infants, but rather gave occasion to further and peculiar ties, as we have seen, surely its *passing away* could not. And if the abrogation of the old Jewish dispensation could not abolish the covenant, what could? *Nothing!* No, the covenant has not been abolished. It cannot be, for it is declared to be an "everlasting covenant;" and, verily, to the end of time it will remain firm and stable, based upon the promise and the oath of God. In confirmation of the correctness of our views, let

it be remembered that the covenant being unchanged, the Church, founded upon it, of course must also remain the same; and this, I repeat it, is an additional evidence that infant membership has not been abolished; and that the Church of God, amid all external changes, is really one and the same is evident from the words of the Saviour: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The Church of God on earth is here included, if not evidently intended; and certainly the mere transferring of an object from one to another can effect no material change in that object. Again, that the Church of God is still the same under both the Jewish and the Christian dispensation, is also evident from what the apostle says about the good olive tree, to which he likens the Church. Rom. xi. Speaking of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, he uses the following language: "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and par-

takest of the root and fatness of the olive, boast not thyself against the branches; but, if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Here the church, the good olive tree, is spoken of as one; and all the changes which have taken place are represented as having reference to the *branches*, not the root or stock. That, amid all external changes, remains one and the same. And if in gospel times there is an *enlargement* of church privileges and members, this is only the beautiful and exact fulfilment of certain prophecies found in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, and in numerous other places in the Old Testament scriptures referring to New Testament times; and this enlargement of church privileges and members in our day can no more affect the identity of the church itself, than the adding of a chamber or two to some marble palace can change the identity of that palace which has been standing on the same spot, defying the storms and ravages of many generations. And to crown the matter, Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of the church as *one build-*

ing, "built upon the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Observe, apostles and prophets are here linked together, and certainly one corner-stone can denote but one building!

Thirdly. Baptism has taken the place of circumcision. We argue this from the fact that, according to the scriptures, both are of the same import, and are made to answer similar purposes. Col. ii. 11. Each is made a seal of the covenant, and both emblematical of spiritual influences which, under the Old Testament dispensation, are called "the circumcision of the heart," and under the new, "regeneration." That baptism has taken the place of circumcision is also evident from the fact, that if baptism be not *now* a seal of the covenant, as circumcision formerly was, then we have *now* no seal of the covenant at all. And if baptism be not, at the present time, the initiatory or recognizing ordinance of the church, then, at the present time, we have no such ordinance whatever. Yes,

"Water seals the blessing now,
That once was sealed with blood."

And does not this fall in precisely with the milder character of the gospel dispensation, and with the well known words of the Saviour, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light?" And this is particularly the case, when baptism is administered, not by immersion, but the more scriptural mode, as we shall hereafter show, of *pouring* or *sprinkling*. And now, having shown that infant membership formed a part of the original constitution of the church of God, and that this membership has not been abolished, it follows, as a matter of course, that infants are entitled to membership still. They are to be admitted by some religious ordinance or other. But baptism is now the only initiatory rite existing; and, therefore, infants are to be baptized.

Hence 1. *The language of our Saviour:* "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Now by "the kingdom of God" we are to understand either the church on

earth, or the church in heaven. If it be the church on earth, then the case is settled; for as children are said to be *of that kingdom*, certainly their right to membership is clear and unquestionable; and if the church in heaven be meant, the case is equally clear, for if they are worthy of membership in the church above, most assuredly they are worthy of membership in the church below. "At another time he took a little child into his arms, and showing it to his disciples, said, 'Whosoever shall receive one such little child (this child) in my name receiveth me.' Matt. xviii. 5; Mark ix. 37. Now the receiving a little child in Christ's name, must mean the considering or treating it as standing in some peculiar relation to Christ, as (του Χριστου ων) belonging to Christ; that is, as being of his flock. That this is what our Lord means *by receiving in his name*, he himself has shown in the same discourse, expressly explaining it, *because ye belong* to Christ. 'For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, *because ye belong to Christ*, verily I say unto you he

shall not lose his reward.' Mark ix. 41 Hence it is evident infants may be, yea are to be received in Christ's name; that is, to be received as belonging to Christ, or as capable of standing, and actually standing, in some peculiar relation to him; but such a relation can be constituted only by their being solemnly devoted to him, and being admitted into his church by his ministers." Besides, from our Saviour's saying, "Suffer little children to come to me," it appears he thought them capable of being his disciples, because *to come to him*, and *not to come to him*, in a figurative sense, imply being proselytes or not to his religion; and the original word justifies this sense, because it is the word from which *proselyte* is derived. This is confirmed by the fact, that he makes *children* the standard of qualification for the kingdom of heaven. Mark x. 14; Matt. xviii. 3. Thus we come again to the same conclusion. Moreover, I would ask in what way can ministers forbid children coming to Christ, except by debarring them from admission into the visible church on earth? If Christ was

willing to *receive* children, do we follow his example, or act in accordance with his spirit, if we *reject* them? and what if the cry of these little ones thus excluded from the fold, should enter into the ears of Him who not only said, "Feed my sheep," but also, "feed my lambs?" But in further confirmation of our doctrine, that infants ought to be baptized, we adduce

2. *The last great command of our Saviour*—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you." In our translation, we have the word *to teach* repeated. This is tautological, and is not sanctioned by the original; for the Greek words are not the same. In the first place, it is μαθητευσατε, and in the second διδασκοντες, the first meaning unquestionably to *disciple*, or *make disciples;* and the other to *teach*. By this command all nations are to be *discipled* and *baptized*, and *afterwards taught*. And now if all nations are to be discipled and baptized, and

placed upon the roll of those who are to be taught the things pertaining to the kingdom, as children form a part of all nations, they are certainly entitled to the same privilege with others. And with regard to the matter of *discipling* all nations, the Saviour in his last command seems to point out the very mode and manner in which this is to be done, viz. by baptizing. As when Paul and Barnabas are said to have returned to certain places, *confirming* the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith,* we are informed of the *way* and *manner* in which they confirmed the souls of these disciples; namely, by exhorting them to continue in the faith; so the apostles, and all duly authorized ministers were to make disciples by baptizing; and certainly in this way and manner infants may be discipled as well as others; aye, and, as we believe, in apostolic times were thus discipled.† For,

* The conjunction *and* is not in the original, and therefore the latter member of the sentence is simply explanatory of the former.

† "Suppose," says one, "there were a master, who

3. *There is the case of household baptisms,* which falls in very naturally with the doctrine of infant baptism, and which cannot very easily be accounted for on any other principle. Let it be remembered, that there are no less than four cases upon sacred record: the household of Lydia, of Stephanas, of Cornelius, and the Jailer. Can we suppose for one moment, that there was not a single child in one of these four households? The thing is incredible! For now let any individual just spread the wing; let him hover over any continent or island in this wide world, and let

had the secret of predisposing a child to future learning, or of giving a principle or power of future knowledge; would it not be a very desirable and proper thing to put children under his management? and when done, would it not be very reasonable to account such children, though infants, scholars or disciples of such a master, even before they should be actually taught? Yet Mr. Tombs, a learned anti-pedobaptist, acknowledges that the grace of God may put infants into Christ, and unite them to him by his Spirit." Among the Romans, an apprentice, as soon as it was agreed he should become such, and before he had received any instruction, was called (discipulus) a *disciple.*

him alight on any spot whatever, in the city or in the wilderness; and let him enter into any of the first four houses nearest at hand, and baptize all the inmates in each, and if some child be not baptized it would be strange indeed. He might make the experiment a hundred times, and I fully believe there would be no failure in a single case. Indeed, the account which is given of the baptism of Lydia's household seems to admit of no reasonable doubt, so far as her family is concerned. The record is this: Acts xvi. 14, 15; "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul; and when she was baptized, *and her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there; and she constrained us." Whose heart did the Lord open? Lydia's. Any other mentioned? Not another! and yet it is said *she was baptized, and her household.* But what else? *She* besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me* to be faithful.

Observe *me*, not *us*. If any other adults were converted, why was there not some mention made of them also? And *she* constrained us. If other adults were converted and baptized by Paul, I think, judging from what I have seen in our day, their affection for the apostle would have induced them to unite with Lydia, in urging him to abide with them some days. I feel quite sure that young converts in similar circumstances in our times, could not and would not be altogether silent. I believe that on that occasion Lydia was the only adult converted; who can say there were others? We are told that *she* was baptized, *and her household*. I believe that her household embraced children; who can say it did not?

4. There is a passage in Cor. vii. 14, which very naturally falls in with our doctrine; and which, on any other principle, seems to be altogether inexplicable. It is this. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." *Unclean!* What

does the apostle mean? Illegitimate? Certainly not; for it would be strange indeed if it required one parent to be a believer to *legitimatize* the offspring. No, no! this cannot be. What then? A Jew would have caught the idea immediately, for he well knew that, according to the long established usage, the term *unclean* denoted *unfitness to be admitted to church ordinances;* and the term *holy* just the reverse. And I ask, does not the language of the apostle, on our principles, present just such a case as might have been expected to occur? Paul having taught that all believers were recognized as the children of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise—the case, when both parents are believers, would be clear; *their* children would, of course be embraced in the covenant. But if only one parent be a believer, what then? Why, says Paul, the gospel leans to the side of mercy. Let the child be admitted on the faith of one parent. How natural is this interpretation; and if infants were admitted to church membership in apostolic times, as we know was the case, how natural was it

that just such a case should have occurred!* But this leads me to mention in the

Fourth and last place that the testimony of "the fathers" in favour of infant baptism is full, clear, positive, and express. Justin Martyr, who lived immediately after the apostolic times, says in so many words, that in the earliest days of the Christian church baptism was practised in the place of circumcision. Irenæus, who flourished not long after, states expressly that the church learned from the apostles to baptize children.

* It is plain from this passage that the Christian dispensation, as well as the Jewish, makes a distinction between the children of believers and the children of infidels. Some of the Corinthian converts having unbelieving yoke-fellows, doubted the lawfulness of cohabiting with them, lest among other evil consequences the offspring of such unequal marriages should be deemed impure and unmeet to be taken into covenant with God. The doubt seemed just, being grounded on the conduct of Ezra x. 1—3. But the apostle tells them that the unbelieving yoke-fellow *was so far sanctified* by (*to* or *because of*) the believing, as that their children (which would be otherwise *unclean*) are now *holy*. Thus the state or condition of the children in respect to *holiness* or

In a tract recently published it is stated that Tertullian opposed infant baptism as an *innovation*; but the truth is, he is an incontestable witness to its long continued prevalence. He did indeed advise that the baptism of infants should be deferred, except in cases of necessity; but he appears to have been quite

uncleanness is made to depend upon the belief or unbelief of their parents. The children of unbelievers are *unclean*, that is, they do not stand in any visible covenant relation to Jehovah. The children of believers are *holy;* that is, holy in the same sense the Jews were holy as a nation; that is, as standing in a peculiar relation to God. The sentiment, therefore, of an infant's holiness, and of the propriety of its being brought into the church and solemnly dedicated to God, is quite scriptural and rational. The infant Jesus was brought to the temple for that purpose. Luke ii. 22, 23. The sacred ceremony under which he passed, was of the same nature as the solemn presentation of our infants to God, at the time of their baptism. It may be added in confirmation, that in the Jewish sense *to be uncircumcised* is *to be unclean*. Compare Acts x. 28 with xi. 3, 8, 9. Hence the lxx. say that Joshua *cleansed* the children of Israel, when the Hebrew text says he *circumcised* them, Josh v. 4. See also Isaiah vi. 13; Ezra ix. 2; Lev. xxi. 23; Col. ii. 11.

singular in this his advice. Some there are indeed who understand Tertullian in the passages referred to, as intending only the infants of heathen parents, which Christians of those days were wont to baptize when they came into their power, by purchase or conquest; and that such was his meaning may be urged upon probable grounds. But we have nothing to do with Tertullian's reasoning or orthodoxy on this or any other point. He is cited merely as a witness to a matter of fact. His words are, *Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione*, &c. "Therefore, according to every one's condition, disposition, and also age, the delaying of baptism *is more profitable;* especially in the case of children." And again, *Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum? Quid enim necesse est sponsores etiam periculo ingeri*, &c. "Why does that innocent age make such haste to the remission of sins? (i. e. to baptism.) What necessity is there that the sponsors (i. e. god-fathers) be brought into danger?" These questions plainly prove the practice of baptizing infants in those days.

This author lived about a hundred years after the age of the apostles, and is the only person among the ancients who advises even to defer the baptism of infants, which he does under the superstitious notion that baptism literally washed away all sins previously committed, and that sins subsequently committed were extremely dangerous, because the rite of baptism could not be repeated. On the same ground that this author recommends the deferring of the baptism of infants, he advises "that unmarried persons should be kept off from this sacrament, who are likely to come into temptation; . . . . until they either marry or be confirmed in continence," for, says he, "those who understand the weight of baptism will rather dread the receiving of it than the delaying of it." (Tertullian de Baptis. cap. 18.)

It may be interesting to some readers to know what other early Christian writers have said upon this subject. They are undoubtedly good witnesses to matters of fact within their knowledge, although we may justly reject many of their opinions as absurd or unsound.

Origen, who was cotemporary with Tertullian, (Hom. viii. on Levit. chap. xii.,) has these words: "Infants also by usage of the church are baptized." Again, on Luke he says: "*Parvuli baptizantur in remissionem*," &c. "Infants are baptized for the remission of sins." In another treatise (Com. on Epist. Rom. l. 5) he says, "*Pro hoc et ecclesia*," &c. "For this also it was that the church had from the apostles a tradition or order to give baptism to infants."

Cyprian, who wrote about one hundred and fifty years after the apostles, gives, if possible, a more indubitable testimony to the practice of infant baptism. In his time, (A. D. 253,) a council of sixty-six bishops having been convened at Carthage, one Fidus, a country bishop, having entertained some doubt, not whether infants should be baptized at all, but whether baptism might be lawfully given them before they were eight days old, according to the law of circumcision; they unanimously decreed *that the baptism of infants was not to be deferred till the eighth day*, and after many things said to

the point, they conclude thus: "*Cæterum si homines impedire aliquid*," &c. "But if anything should hinder men from baptism, it will be heinous sins, which will debar the adult and mature therefrom; and if those who have sinned extremely, yet afterward believe, are baptized, (and no man is prohibited from this grace,) how much more ought not *an infant* to be prohibited, who being *but just born* is guilty of no sin but of original, which he contracted from Adam? Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is our opinion that from baptism and the grace of God, who is kind and benign to all, none ought to be prohibited by us, which as it is to be observed with respect to all, so especially with respect to *infants*, and those who are *but just born*, who deserve our help and the Divine mercy." (Cyprian Epist. ad Fidum. Epist. 64.)

This extract proves beyond reasonable dispute, that it was the constant and established practice of the Church at the time this author lived to baptize infants. It shows also that no regard whatever was paid to the

advice of Tertullian on this subject, if indeed his advice was general, and not confined, as before suggested, to the infants of heathen parents.

If now we may suppose that the bishops composing this council (or as we should say Synod) were born of Christian parents, (and there is no reason to doubt that some of them were,) they must have known whether they were baptized in infancy, by the information of their parents; and if we may suppose that some of them were advanced in life, (as probably some were,) the practice may thus be traced through them to within eighty or ninety years of the age of the apostles, and the Christian parents of these bishops, or of such of them as were advanced in life, could not but certainly know what the practice and the appointment of the apostles was in this matter.*

* To avoid misconception as to the character and functions of these bishops, the reader will do well to consult Abbé Fleury's discourse upon the history of the first six ages of the church, in which he will find (§ V.) a passage to the following effect:—"The bishops (viz. of the first six centuries,) being entirely

The Clementine Constitutions, a book esteemed by some to be of great antiquity, and by all acknowledged to have been extant in the fourth or fifth century, contains this ex-

occupied with their functions, thought not how they should be clothed or lodged. They gave no great attention to the temporalities of *their church*. The care of those they left to the deacons or to stewards, but they did not abandon to others the *spiritual*. Their occupation was prayer, instruction, correction. They entered into every possible detail. It was for this reason, *that their dioceses were so small;* so that one person only would be sufficient," (i. e. for a diocese,) "and *might know by himself the whole of his flock*. For to act by others, and from a distance, *one bishop* would have been sufficient for the *whole Church*. It is true there were priests" (he means elders) "to lighten their labours even in the spiritual, to preside at prayers, and to celebrate the holy sacrifice," (he means the Lord's Supper,) "in case of the absence or sickness of the bishop, to baptize . . . . in case of necessity. Sometimes the bishop confided to them even the ministry of the word, *for regularly it was only the bishop who preached*. The priests" (i. e. elders) "were his council, and the senate of the church, raised to this rank on account of their ecclesiastical knowledge, their wisdom and experience." Changing a few terms in

press admonition: "Baptize your infants, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God; for he says, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.'"

Several other testimonies might be produced from Clemens Romanus, Hermas, the Recognitions of St. Peter, Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Jerome, very full and conclusive to the purpose; but they are too long to be inserted in this treatise. There are some, however, in the writings of Augustine and Pelagius so very remarkable and decisive that they must not be omitted. These two celebrated persons lived and wrote about three hundred and ten years after the age of the apostles. They are not cited to prove that the baptism of infants was universally practised in their days, but to show that

this account, as they ought to be changed, it is easy to trace in it substantially an organization closely similar to a Presbyterian church, consisting of a minister and a bench of elders. Such, undoubtedly, were the sixty-six bishops composing the council convened at Carthage, (A. D. 253,) above referred to.

they considered it to have been the constant and unvarying practice of the church from the beginning.

Augustine, in his controversy with Pelagius about original sin, in order to prove that infants were tainted with it, frequently urges an argument from *their baptism.* He asks Pelagius "why infants are baptized for the remission of sin, if they have none." Pelagius seems greatly embarrassed by this argument, and any one can see how much it concerned him to deny the fact that infants were and had been baptized from the beginning, if he could have done so. Had infant baptism been an *innovation* or a *departure* from the apostolic practice, Pelagius was too acute, and too well informed, not to have known the fact and the importance of it to his cause. Yet so far from attempting anything like this he affirms the fact, though he endeavours by various shifts to evade its force.

Some of his adversaries, having drawn as a consequence of his opinion, *that infants are not to be baptized*, he warmly disclaims it, and complains with indignation, "*Se ab hominibus*

infamari quod neget a parvulis baptismi sacramentum," &c.; "that he had been slanderously represented by men as denying the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven without the redemption of Christ." He adds, "*Nunquam se vel impium aliquem hæreticum audisse qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis diceret,*" &c.; "that he never heard, no not even any impious heretic who would say that which he had mentioned, *viz.* that *unbaptized infants* are not liable to condemnation for the first man, and that they are not to be cleansed by the regeneration of baptism." He then proceeds, "*Quis enim ita evangelicæ lectionis ignarus est,*" &c. "for who is so ignorant of that which is read in the gospel as, I do not say, boldly to affirm, but even lightly to suggest, or even to imagine such a thing? In a word, who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of God?"

After citing John iii. 5, he goes on thus: "*Quis ille tam impius est qui cujuslibet ætatis parvulo,*" &c., "Who is there so impious

as to refuse to an infant, of what age soever, the common redemption of mankind?" (See also August. de Peccato Origin. cap. 17, 18, de Pec. Merit. cap. 6. Serm. x. de Verb. Apost.)

To estimate this piece of testimony rightly, the reader should know that Pelagius, and his co-worker Celestius, were born, the one in Britain and the other in Ireland. They lived a long time in Rome, at that time the centre of the world. They were both for some time at Carthage, in Africa—then the one settled at Jerusalem; the other travelled through the East, and visited all the noted Greek and Eastern churches in Europe and Asia. If there had been then any church or number of churches in any part of the world, either at that time or in any preceding age of the church, who denied baptism to infants, it is incredible that these two learned and sagacious persons should not have heard of it, nor would they have failed to take advantage of it, to check the triumph of their opponents, and wrest from them this argument, by which they were more grievously pressed than by

any other. But instead of such a denial of the fact, they endeavoured to evade its force sometimes by alleging that infants have *actual sin*, and that their peevishness of temper is to be considered such. Sometimes they urged that infants had pre-existed, and it was for sins committed in some former state they were baptized; sometimes they said they were not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, but that they may be made heirs of the kingdom—sometimes, that they *were baptized for forgiveness*, not that they had any sin, but that the uniformity of the words might be kept; or because they were baptized into the church where forgiveness was to be had, and with a sacrament which had the means of forgiveness for those who wanted it.

To such extreme difficulties they saw themselves reduced, in order to reconcile their opinion with the baptism of infants, all of which would have been removed instantly by denying the fact that infants were or ought to be baptized. But the fact is that infant baptism was, at that time, as Celestius confessed, *according to the rule of the universal church.*

No one can, I think, in view of this testimony, successfully deny the universal prevalence of infant baptism in apostolic times;* and for many centuries after. Now, how shall we account for this, if the doctrine of infant baptism be not correct? If these ancient and renowned fathers were simply giving their views of what they deemed right and proper, we might all feel a perfect liberty to exercise our own judgment in the premises; but when they perfectly agree in the simple statement of a matter of fact, certainly their testimony deserves as much credit as that of any other historian. Even spurious writings, if incontestably ancient, may furnish good evidence of a fact like this. And now, in view of all these things, to deny that infant membership was recognized, and infant baptism was practised, in the earliest and palmiest days of the church, seems to me much the same as to deny that Christ ever taught, or the apostles ever lived, or the

* It is remarkable that those who tell us that *immersion* was practised in primitive times, also tell us that *children* also were immersed.

martyrs ever suffered; and yet, in these later ages, this *church membership of infants* divinely appointed and never repealed; this blessed privilege, made sacred by a thousand hallowed associations, is to be abolished and set aside as an "evil and a curse." How? By any positive command? No! Such cannot be shown. How then abolished and set aside? By inference, and that inference not good. I repeat it, that inference not good. I will now mention some of the things most relied upon, and then let the reader do his own thinking, and judge for himself.

1. It is said that there is *no precept* in all the Bible for *infant baptism;* and, therefore, "infants should not be baptized." I answer, There is no precept in all the Bible for *female communion*, and, therefore, on the same principles females must not be permitted to commune. There is no precept *for observing the Christian Sabbath;* and, therefore, we must not observe the Christian Sabbath—nor for family worship, and therefore we must not have family worship. No precept for infant baptism? It was not

necessary. Infant membership divinely appointed, infant baptism, as we have shown, follows as a matter of course. The principle settled, there was no occasion for any further legislation upon the subject. The principle settled, the matter of duty is plain. Not long since, I saw that a reward of one thousand dollars was offered to any one who could produce any precept in the New Testament for infant baptism. I think we may very safely offer a reward (if such offers could prove anything) ten times greater than that, to any one who can point out any precept in the New Testament abolishing infant membership. And this is the precept which is most needed—which is absolutely necessary; for even in human governments, a law once enacted is always in force until repealed. Now, the law touching infant membership was enacted; *where is the record of its repeal?* By a positive precept, infant membership became a law of the church, of course it requires a positive precept to annul it? Where is this precept to be found, if infant membership has been abolished, I ask again,

Where is this abolishing act? And if abolished, by whom abolished? Not by John the Baptist, for he made no pretension to any such power; nor by our Lord, for he said—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" as if he had said, "I am the Head of the church; these are members; suffer the little ones, therefore, to come unto me, their Head, and forbid them not." *Forbid* them! How can ministers forbid children coming to Christ, except by debarring them from membership in that church of which Christ is the Head? And what meant the Saviour by these words: "Whosoever receiveth this little child in my name, receiveth me?" Certainly he meant that little children, or infants, should, in some way or other, be publicly or officially received in his name; and those who in church matters will have nothing to do with children or infants, I ask in what way do they publicly or officially receive them? But if infant membership has been abolished, I ask once more, By whom abolished? We have shown

that it was not abolished by John the Baptist, nor by our Saviour. Well, then, was it abolished by the apostle Peter? He had the special honour of throwing open the doors of the Christian church on the day of Pentecost, and the special honour a little after of first preaching the gospel to the gentiles—did *he* abolish infant membership? I think not; for if, when he went and preached the gospel to Cornelius, many in Jerusalem contended with him, saying, "Thou wentest in unto men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them," can we, for one moment, suppose that none would have contended with him, if he had abolished that which was originally of divine appointment, and that which was made sacred by its associations with the Abrahamic covenant, and long usage, and parental feelings too? This is worthy of serious thought. If Peter's acting contrary to certain Jewish prejudices, in a matter comparatively of small importance, occasioned much excitement, would his abolishing a precious privilege, a privilege esteemed for many ages previously peculiarly sacred and dear, have occasioned no excite-

ment at all? The thing is incredible; and this very silence itself is convincing proof that infant membership was not abolished by Peter, nor any other person in apostolic times. No, nor was any *attempt* made to abolish it, so far as my knowledge goes, for many ages after. In this matter Tertullian, in the second century, stands alone for many, very many long ages; and even *he*, although he opposed infant baptism on the ground of inexpediency, never it seems denied the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, or the right of infants to church membership. The fact is, that infant membership was not opposed, so far as I can learn from history, nor was it proposed even to defer it *until the doctrine* of baptismal regeneration began to prevail, or the idea that water baptism was not merely a symbolical or initiatory rite, but a kind of *saving* ordinance, which literally washed away all sins previously committed. This idea induced many, as in the case of Constantine, to put off baptism until death seemed to be near at hand. And we know some of the evils which have flowed from this

source, even in our day. The matter then here involved is one of great importance, and the question, when and by whom was infant membership abolished, is a very serious one; and as the Bible says some startling things touching those who "*add to*," or "*take from*," what God has commanded, I solemnly declare, that until an act abolishing infant membership can be pointed out, I for one would no more dare to touch that institution of divine appointment, than I would the throne of God; and yet, without an annulling precept, or even the shadow of such a thing, it is to be set aside by *inference*, and that too by those who, in the matter of baptism, are wont to deny the propriety of all inference, and insist upon the necessity of some positive command! This is strange indeed.

2. It is said that "*infants can know nothing of the nature or design of baptism, and therefore they ought not to be baptized.*" I answer, infants in ancient times could know nothing of the nature or design of *circumcision*, and therefore infants in ancient times

ought not to have been circumcised. This is speaking rather boldly I think. We must take care how we handle edged tools; we must take care how we impugn the wisdom of heaven, lest haply we may be found "even to fight against God." Some speak contemptuously of what they are pleased to term "*baby sprinkling;*" and it is not impossible that some in former times were wont to speak just in this way about "*infant circumcision,*" and I am strongly inclined to think that such were signally punished for it. Even Moses himself was once severely rebuked for not paying due respect to that ordinance of divine appointment. Nay more, it had very nearly cost him his life. The record touching this matter is a very remarkable one, and may be found in the fourth chapter of Exodus, from the 24th to the 26th verse, inclusive; and the reading of it may well fill with strange alarm those who deride infant baptism, on the score of infants not understanding the nature and design of that ordinance; and I will go further, and say, if the case be examined, I strongly suspect that

such deriders, either in their own persons or families, have not been without some marked proof of the divine displeasure. At any rate it is written, "Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong." The inference then against infant baptism, drawn from infants not understanding the nature or design of that ordinance, is not good. Nay, it is wicked; and yet this is one of the inferences by which a divine and positive precept may be set aside. But

3. It is further objected, that *in the scriptures, something is said about baptism which cannot apply to infants*, and therefore *infants ought not to be baptized.* And what is this? Why it is said, "Believe and be baptized." Infants cannot believe, and therefore infants must not be baptized. And is it not also said in the same scriptures, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." Infants cannot work, and therefore infants must not eat. Again it is written, "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish." But infants cannot repent, and therefore infants must all likewise perish. And again, "He that believeth

not, shall be damned." Infants cannot believe, and therefore infants must be damned! Reasonings which lead to such conclusions cannot be sound; and yet this is the kind of reasoning employed to set aside an institution *divinely appointed* and never repealed. The fact is, when the command was given to believe and be baptized, it had reference to adults and not infants; and mark, to those also who had, as yet, not been baptized; and this is the very thing we say to those in heathen lands, to whom the gospel had never been preached before, only after the example set by Peter, and we would add by way of encouragement, "for *the promise* is unto you, *and to your children.*" And, just here, I would ask, Why should it be thought incredible that the faith of the parent should, in certain cases, avail to the benefit of the child? There are numerous cases on record. I will mention one, the case of the Syrophœnician woman. Matt. xv. 22—28. "And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David;

my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. And he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered, and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And *her daughter* was made whole from that very hour." In this case the faith of the parent availed for the curing of her daughter, and that too when the daughter was as unconscious of what her mother was doing as the child; and even as the *slumbering* child now is what time the believing parent offers it up to God in the ordinance of baptism.

Take even a stronger case, that of Jairus's daughter (Luke viii. 41, 42, 49, 56; Mark

v. 22, 23, 35, 43). Did the faith of Jairus avail nothing towards the restoration to life of his deceased daughter? The sorrowing parent left her in a dying state to seek the Saviour, but too late, as his friends must have thought, to be of any avail; because she actually expired before he returned. They supposed, no doubt, that although the Saviour had the power to restore health to the living, yet not life to the dead. Perhaps Jairus shared in their belief. But what said the Saviour to him? "Be not afraid, only believe." Believe! what good could the belief of Jairus do to his dead daughter? It might do him good to believe in Jesus, but how could his belief have any effect on his dead child? Ah reader, if you are disposed to ask such questions, be assured that faith has a wonderful power, as this example shows. It is, in truth, a great law in the world of redemption; as wide, pervading, unerring, all-powerful, and controlling, and, for ought we know, infinitely more so than the law of gravitation in the material creation. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews

and Matt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21, and similar passages, and then say, if you can, what effects cannot be accomplished through the power of faith. It was through the medium of Jairus's faith that the almighty power of the Saviour was exerted in this case, in restoring the dead child to life; and with good reason were her parents astonished with great astonishment. Say not that the Saviour could as easily have exerted his power without the faith of the parent (Mark ix. 23; vi. 5, 6). It is not a question concerning *the divine power*, but concerning the *divine will* and the *divine appointment*. God has graciously been pleased to connect a wonder-working power with faith, even when exercised in behalf of others, as we learn from these and many other examples. Now may we not reason thus:—If the faith of the parent proves efficacious in such cases, why not in others? and that especially, as in former times, the Jewish infant was circumcised, not on account of its own faith, but that of its parent. Yes, I say *the faith of the parent!* for we are told that circumcision

was a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. Of whom? Certainly of the parent, not the child. What then, shall we say of the *inference*, that because infants cannot believe, therefore they must not be baptized? This inference bears the family mark of all the rest. It is good for nothing but to prove that the cause which it is adduced to support is unscriptural; is not good.* But the objector urges,

* The following appears to be a fair argument, and pertinent to this question: "As it was in the days of Noah"—the end of the old world, (2 Pet. iii. 6,) "so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man"—the end of the world that now is, (2 Pet. iii. 7; Matt. xiii. 41.) Families existed then as now, and doubtless will exist in all time to come. Now, as the covenant with Noah and *his faith* (Heb. xi. 7,) availed to the saving of his household, (Gen. vi. 8; x. 18, and vii. 1,) by means of the ark, why may we not believe (and is it not tacitly included in our Lord's comparison of the two catastrophes? Luke xvii. 26; Matt. xxiv. 37,) that in like manner God's covenant with Christian parents and *their faith* will avail (although in a different way, Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17,) to the saving of their *infant* offspring; yea to the saving of all their child-

4. *That baptism cannot have taken the place of circumcision, because it is more extensive in its application;* but, I ask, is not this in exact accordance with heaven's plan, that in gospel times there should be a *breaking down of partition walls*, and the

ren, excepting those who, like Lot's sons-in-law, shall wilfully reject or neglect the blessings of the covenant of salvation? Or must we believe, that while pious parents will be caught up to glory, their infant offspring, though consecrated to God, and brought within the Abrahamic or gospel covenant, (Gal. iii. 8,) in the way of his own appointment, (Col. ii. 11,) will be left beneath the deluge of the descending wrath? 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. Did our gracious Lord, who said "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," (words which he used in reference to Jewish children, who, no doubt, bore the seal of the covenant then in use,) intend to intimate there would be any such separation? Matt. xxiv. 40, 41. If the faith of Jairus availed to the resurrection of his dead daughter, (Mark v. 36—42,) why may not the faith of Christian parents in that day bear their infant children with them upward to glory; seeing that they also are heirs and children of the same gracious and everlasting covenant, which contains the assurance that they shall not be cut off from their people. Gen. xvii. 13, 14; Col. ii. 11.

enlargement of church privileges and subjects? Read Isaiah liv. 2, 3. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." Whilst Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians tells us that Christ *has broken* down the wall of partition between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and made them both one, in his epistle to the Galatians, he goes further, and tells us that under the gospel dispensation, not only is the distinction which formerly existed between *different nations* destroyed, but also between *all classes*, *conditions* and *sexes;* and that too with regard to this very thing of church membership and baptism. I give you his very words: Gal. iii. 27—29. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither *Jew* nor *Greek*, there is neither *bond* nor *free*, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." And is it not very remarkable that this enlargement

of church privileges in relation to *male* and *female* is made the subject matter of a special prophecy? Thus, in Isaiah xlix. 22, we find these words: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." This is truly a remarkable prophecy; and who is not struck with its beautiful and exact fulfilment, when, in our days, Christian parents come forward publicly, into the sanctuary, to enter into covenant with God, *bringing "their sons in their arms* and *their daughters upon their shoulders?"* Thus, then, the argument urged against infant baptism, from the more extensive application of the present initiatory rite, is positively and strongly in its favour; and yet this is one of the leading arguments urged for setting aside an institution, as we have shown, divinely appointed and never repealed. But, says the objector:

5. If infants are received as members of the visible church on earth, why are they not

admitted to the table of the Lord? I answer, they are received not as *adults*, but as *infants*; and, certainly, a distinction should be made between *infant* and *adult* membership. The correctness of this principle is acknowledged in state citizenship; and why not in church membership? The law of the land will not permit any child, though an American citizen, to approach the *ballot-box* until he has the qualifications prescribed; that is, until he is twenty-one years of age; even so the law of the church will not permit a child, though an infant member, to come to the table of the Lord until he has the qualifications prescribed: viz. "knowledge to discern the Lord's body, faith to feed upon him; repentance, love, and new obedience." 1 Cor. xi. 23—29. And now, shall we say because the child is not admitted to the ballot-box, he cannot be in any sense an American citizen? Equally absurd would it be to affirm, that because a child is not admitted to a certain ordinance of the church, therefore he cannot, in any sense, be a member of that church. Here, then, is another

inference against infant baptism, which I think has been properly disposed of; or another argument, so called, to be laid in the same grave with those gone before it. Once more:

6. Another objection is this: *What advantage is there in infant baptism?* Here it is assumed, that no benefit can result from baptizing infants, and therefore infants should not be baptized. I deny the premises, and therefore cannot admit the conclusion. *What advantage?* Much every way. And first to the child. Children, when baptized, are given up to God as was Samuel; and on that very account are more likely to receive blessings from above. Besides, being thus "discipled by baptism," they are enrolled as young disciples in the school of Christ, to be instructed and tenderly watched over by the church, and particularly by the *pastor*, to whom the chief Shepherd has given this special charge, Feed my sheep; feed my lambs. And here I would remark, if the sheep are in the fold, why should not the little lambs be there also? Besides, baptized children are placed under the immediate care

of those parents who have taken the vows of God upon them, touching this very matter; and who, also, upon that very account, are likely to be more conscientious in the discharge of all parental duty. It was *after* Abraham had given up his family to God, in the religious rite which then existed, that God said, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Parents have an almost unbounded influence over their children. They can do much to form and stamp the character of their children, for virtue or for vice, for heaven or for hell. And if parents could only be roused to a more faithful and conscientious discharge of parental duty, I do believe that the benefit thereof, resulting to children, would be great indeed. And what, I would ask, is better calculated to excite parents to a proper discharge of parental duty, than the act of giving up their children to God in a public and solemn covenant, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? And hence the remark, so commonly made,

that "the children of Presbyterian parents are better trained than others." And is this nothing? But even this is not all. Baptized children, I verily believe, are not unfrequently held in check, and made deeply serious, too, by the thought that they were in early life given up to God in the sacred ordinance of baptism; and that they have no right to undo what their parents have done. Indeed, I know at least one case of this kind, and thank God it was in the bosom of my own family, and has reference to one who is now in the holy office of the gospel ministry.

7. But suppose, says the objector, the baptized child is removed by death during infancy —what advantage is baptism to him then? Much, I would believe, every way, although I could not tell or even surmise how; for sure I am, that God will put honour upon his covenant, and show it to be no unmeaning thing. We are not obliged to suppose that infants dying *unbaptized* before they are capable of actual sin, will either be annihilated or punished with the pains of hell, in order to show

the superior advantage of the baptized infants of believers. No; for when God covenanted with Abraham that he would be the God of his infant offspring, and gave him circumcision as the seal of his covenant, the covenant undoubtedly implied some peculiar privilege, yea, something very great. He certainly intended that Abraham should understand that He would be in a peculiar manner their guardian and benefactor—that he would take them under his especial patronage and care of his providence—would bestow on them the influences of his Spirit, and vouchsafe to them the ministration of his angels if they lived; but if they died in their infant state without actual sin, with the seal of the covenant in their flesh, they should not therefore be cut off from their people as in the case of the uncircumcised, but should certainly be raised to a state of happiness after death, with all the holy of their nation. To be their God, implied at least thus much; "For God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Luke xx. 37. And the promise to be their God, is as much as to promise that they shall be

his sons (Rev. xxi. 7); and whosoever is a son of God will assuredly be declared or manifested to be such by a glorious resurrection. Rom. viii. 19; Luke xx. 36. But, says the objector, if the uncircumcised infant who died without actual sin, be also raised from the dead, what advantage then? Much, I must still believe, every way; because sure I am that God will in some way, though I may not know how, put honour upon his own covenant. And now, suppose I were to affirm that the circumstances of all those infants, who are solemnly devoted to God in the way of his appointment, (whether by circumcision or baptism) may consistently, with the divine perfections, be more advantageous or glorious in the future state, than the circumstances of those who were never thus devoted to him—what could the objector reply? Paul teaches us that there are different degrees of glory among those raised from the dead; just as there are differences in the glory of the sun, moon, and the different stars. Some have supposed the advantage may consist in their being aggregated to a more glorious company

of the redeemed, or that it may consist in an earlier as well as in a more glorious resurrection. Apart, however, from such suppositions, (which I merely mention for the objector to answer,) we may at least be sure of thus much, that God will assuredly put honour on his own appointments, and that is enough: "What I do, thou knowest not now," said the Lord to Peter, "but thou shalt know hereafter," and were we as ignorant of the meaning of this ordinance, as applied to infants, as Peter was of the Lord's intent in washing the disciples' feet, before he explained it, yet it would none the less concern us to receive with faith, and implicitly to follow, all the appointments of the Lord. It is our duty as well as our glorious privilege to do so; and not less those which we do not understand, than those which we *may suppose we do understand. If like Peter* we refuse to obey, until *we know the reason and the use of them*, where is our faith, nay, where is our discipleship? John xiii. 8.

But again, what advantage? much every way. Not to children only, but to parents

also. The very act of presenting their children to God in a public and solemn manner, the very act of entering into covenant engagements to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the very nature of the case, *must* have a powerful and happy influence upon the *hearts* of parents, and upon their *lives* also. Yes, I have seen the pious parent presenting his children to God in baptism. I saw deep devotion marked in his countenance; he was solemn; the tear was in his eye. I saw it steal silently down his cheek; he was thinking about serious matters; he was covenanting with his God; he was pleading for his children; he was doing a work for great eternity. And how natural for a parent, after a transaction of this kind, to retire and think thus with himself—I have gone into the presence of my Maker upon a solemn errand. I have given up my children to God in a holy ordinance; my vows are recorded on earth, they are registered in heaven. O for grace to fulfil my vows, and keep all my

engagements.* And if a child thus consecrated to God, should be laid upon a bed of death, how it will strengthen the faith of the parent in offering up his last prayer for this

* In the language of another, the sentiments of a pious parent may be expressed thus:

"Oh God of grace and of glory, our good and gracious Father, I acknowledge, with the greatest thankfulness and joy, thine absolute right in me, and in all that is mine, for all I have is thy gracious gift. This child thou hast given me, and I receive it as from thy hand. It is *thine*, for thou hast made it, and redeemed it by the blood of thine only begotten Son. To thee, therefore, I now solemnly *devote* and *give it up*, to be guarded by thy Providence, ministered to by thy angels, taught, influenced, and strengthened by thy Spirit, guided safely through the many dangers and evils of this present world, and to be preserved unto thy everlasting kingdom.

"For ever blessed be thy name, that as by one man's offence judgment came upon all to condemnation and death; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift comes upon all to justification of life;—that as the fatal effects of the first Adam's sin extend to our infant offspring, subjecting them to pain, and misery, and death; so the salutary effects of the second Adam's righteousness extend also to *these*—our beloved offspring.

dying child! And how it will comfort his heart to think that he had done for his child what he could! Alas! that *any parent* should lightly esteem an institution so im-

"I render thee unfeigned thanks, that the blessings of redemption and of the covenant of grace reach also to them—that thou didst command that little children should be brought into thy presence to receive thy blessing, and that thou didst declare such to belong to thy family and thy kingdom. I thank thee that thou hast appointed the baptismal water as a memorial of thy favour and gracious acceptance of them, and of thy readiness to pour thy Spirit on our seed and thy blessing on our offspring. Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief. I most thankfully embrace this liberty which thou hast given me. I here bring my helpless infant, commending it to thee and the power of thy grace: Oh receive it into the number of thy chosen ones, and into the arms of thy love. Pour down thy blessings upon it. Write its name in the book of life. Sanctify it from this dawning of its being, and make it a chosen, a consecrated vessel fitted for thy service. May thy Spirit henceforth and for ever continually dwell in it with his life-giving power, rectifying the disorders of its nature, rooting out the seeds of vanity and folly, which may spring up in its heart—enlightening its understanding, strengthening its moral powers, puri-

portant, and the associations of which are so sacred and tender. And alas, too, that *any minister* especially should divest this ordinance of its proper interest and solemnity, by administering it in a cold and formal manner, as if it were only an unmeaning ceremony. When children are presented to God, the scene, to one whose heart is rightly affected, is one of deep and thrilling interest. It is calculated to remind us of the words of

fying and controlling its passions and appetites, and forming it into a living temple of God.

"Guard and preserve, if it please thee, the life thou hast thus graciously bestowed. Conduct it unharmed through the dangers of childhood and youth. Spare it to be a blessing to its friends, and a burning and shining light in this dark and corrupted world. As it grows in years, may it also continually grow in grace, in wisdom, in virtue, and in favour with God and men. Grant also that I may ever walk before it with a wise and perfect heart, to bring it up in the fear and in the nurture of the Lord, and may I so faithfully discharge all my duties towards it, that I may at last meet it with joy at thy appearing and kingdom, and may then say with triumph and joy, 'Behold me and this child which thou hast given me.'"

Moses, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, your captains, your elders, your officers, with all the men of Israel, and your little ones, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself." It is calculated also to remind us of the fact recorded in the tenth chapter of Matthew, in these words: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them, and he took them up in his arms and blessed them." And how interesting is the thought, that in presenting our children to God in baptism, we are showing a proper regard to a time-honoured as well as a divine institution; that we are imitating those who have gone before; and are one in feeling and sentiment with thousands, and tens of thousand of the excellent of the earth of the present day.

"Thus Lydia sanctified her house,
When she received the word;
Thus the believing jailor gave
His household to the Lord;

Thus later saints, eternal King,
Thine ancient truths embrace,
To thee their infant offspring bring
And humbly claim thy grace."

O, if the occasion were only properly improved; if ministers would only, at *such a time*, speak feelingly and strongly, as they should, on the subject of parental responsibility; I do believe that the influence upon parents, and all parties concerned, would be most happy. Nay, I will go further and say, no ordinance would be more *impressive*, and even none more earnestly desired, for the relation of parent and child is very tender. I well recollect, once in particular, when preaching on this subject of infant baptism, how my own feelings were wrought upon. The idea that my parents had publicly and solemnly given me up to God; and then, shortly after, had taken their flight for glory; this idea, suddenly flashing upon my mind, came over me with great sweetness and power. My heart was melted! my soul was subdued! I wept, and many of my hearers wept with me; for they too, as

children of the covenant, had also, by their parents, been given up to God in infancy, in the holy ordinance of baptism. Even a brave and veteran soldier who was present, and who had won laurels on the battle field, could not himself refrain from weeping like a child; and shall such associations have no place in the church of Christ? God has very closely linked parents and children together, in the kingdom of nature, and why should he not in the kingdom of grace? In Christ alone can parents hope to have any permanent happy union with their children. The doctrine of infant membership is an exceedingly precious one; and the privilege of having our children embraced with us, in the bonds of the everlasting covenant in Christ, is of inestimable value! And I would again say, if the sheep are in the fold, why should not the little lambs be there also? And now, this ordinance of divine appointment, hallowed by long usage, which existed in the purest and holiest days of the church, which is made sacred by its associations with the Abrahamic covenant, and parental feel-

ing,* and which moreover is so admirably calculated to have a powerful and happy influence upon domestic comfort and family religion—this precious privilege has, in these later times, been stigmatized as "an *evil*," and "a *curse*;" and is to be abolished by no divine precept, but by mere human inference, and that inference, as we have clearly shown, not good; and abolished, too, by those who are wont to insist upon it, that in the matter of baptism no inference will answer—there must be a positive precept. How strange, how passing strange is it, that those who insist upon a positive precept, when it is not at all needed, should, in excluding infants, be willing themselves to act without such a precept, when it is absolutely indispensable. This is truly a serious matter; and to say nothing of the fearful responsibility involved, it may, I think, well be numbered with the inconsistencies of human nature.

* Gal. iii. throughout, where the whole scope of the apostle's argument is to prove that the covenan with Abraham is still in being and force, and that his blessing has come on all believers.

Having thus given, what I verily believe to be a plain and scriptural view of the proper subjects of baptism, I shall now proceed to consider:

II. The proper mode. But, first, I would make two preliminary remarks.

1. The Christian religion, directing men to one great object—to worship God in spirit and in truth, seems to regard matters of mere mode and form, as comparatively of small importance; hence no particular mode has been prescribed for private, social, or public worship; nor any particular posture in singing, praying, or taking the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper, equally with baptism, is a holy sacrament; and yet what little stress is laid upon all the modes and forms connected with this sacrament! Some persons, for example, take it kneeling, some sitting, and some standing; whilst the primitive disciples took it neither kneeling, sitting, nor standing, but reclining. Some make use of leavened, and some of unleavened bread; and whilst some take it on the first day of the week, and some on the second,

some in the morning, and some in the afternoon, it is certain that the apostles at its original institution took it neither on the first nor on the second day, but on the *fifth;* and neither in the morning nor in the afternoon, but at night. And whereas it is called a *supper*, and in early times the supper was the principal meal, yet now any portion of the elements of bread and wine, however small, is deemed sufficient. And let it be remembered, that this latitude in relation to the modes and forms of one sacrament, is freely allowed, even by those who, in relation to the other sacrament, will allow of no latitude whatever.

2. As the Christian religion was designed to embrace the whole world, it is reasonable to suppose that baptism as well as the Lord's supper would be adapted to the physical condition and circumstances of all mankind. If our views be correct, this is the case; but if baptism means immersion, and immersion only, then this adaptedness does not exist; for immersion is neither suited to the frozen regions of the polar circle, nor to the burning

sands of the barren desert; neither to him who is chained down in a dungeon, nor to him who is confined to a bed by chronic disease. Why this want of adaptedness in the sacrament of baptism? Are there two Gods? and does the God of grace require what the God of providence forbids? Whence this apparent conflict? and why is that beautiful analogy, seen to reign in all the departments of the empire of God, broken only here? Having made these preliminary remarks, which I deem of much importance, I will now state distinctly the ground which I take. It is this:

Water baptism being an emblem of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and significant of spiritual cleansing or purification, may properly be administered in various ways; the Scriptures in no place, either by precept, example, or allusion, limiting it to any one particular mode; or in other words, immersion is not the only mode, nor is it the most scriptural.

The Greek word *Baptism* has a variety of meanings. If we deny this, we must wage war with many *Greek lexicons*, for they cer-

tainly give more meanings than one; such as to dye, to stain, to dip, to wash, to purify, and to immerse. Even Dr. Carson, who affirms that the word rendered baptism always means to *dip*, admits that he has all the lexicographers and commentators against him. Here I would remark, that if Dr. Carson is right in affirming that the word means *to dip*, and *only to dip*, and those also are right who say it means to *immerse* and *immerse only*, does not this prove that the word has more meanings than one? for, whilst *to dip* conveys the idea of *putting under* and taking out, to *immerse* conveys the idea simply of "putting under, without any reference whatever to *taking out*;" (as Pharaoh and his horsemen may truly be said to have been immersed, for they sank as lead in the deep waters, and rose no more.) Those, therefore, who insist upon it, that the word baptism means *immersion*, and immersion *only*, are peculiarly unfortunate,* because

* The Baptist Missionaries at Calcutta, strange as it may seem, have pushed their reform of the ancient Armenian version of the New Testament to this ex-

they condemn their champion, who says that baptism means to *dip*—that is, "to put under, *and take out again*"—and not to immerse and nothing more—that is, to *put under*, and

tent, as will be seen by the following extract of a letter to the author from a returned Missionary:

"The New Testament was translated into the noble tongue of the Armenians early in the fifth century. The version is not perfect, but is most admirable, and ranks next to the Syriac in point of value and authority. This ancient Armenian version we translated, at Smyrna, into the modern dialect, as it is spoken in Asia Minor. The Baptist Missionaries at Calcutta (under the patronage of the American and Foreign Bible Society) have also published a translation of it into the modern dialect as spoken by the Armenians in India and Persia. The difference between these two dialects is not very material.

"At your request I would state a fact respecting this Baptist New Testament which will speak for itself. In the Armenian language, both in the ancient and modern form of it, to baptize is *muggurdel*. This signifies to *baptize*, to *dip*, to *wash*, to *immerse*. This is the word which, from the time of the nation's conversion to Christianity, has always been employed. It needs no translation, for the most ignorant Armenian knows that it means to baptize; and they all understand too that baptism is to be by immersion. Would you not suppose that, in these circumstances,

not take out again. Moreover, they are inconsistent with themselves; for they immerse *and take out again*, whilst they hold to immersion and immersion only. Again, if we

our Baptist brethren would have been content to let alone the old word so long set apart to this idea? No! this did not suit them. Accordingly they cast about for some word of a still more Baptist complexion, and finding one which they thought suitable, they have introduced it, sometimes alone and sometimes with the old word along side of it, in parenthesis, to explain its meaning. And what is this term which has displaced the old and well-understood *muggurdel?* Your readers will be as much amused as you were, to learn that it is no other than a word which, in its every-day application, means *to drown!* The word is *ungughmel.* Having been for twelve years resident among the Armenians, and having learned their language (both ancient and modern) so as to translate into it and preach in it, I feel prepared to say that the ordinary acceptation of this word is no other than the above. If a ship founders and goes to the bottom, the Armenians would say that she *ungughmetsav;* and when they refer to the Egyptians, as drowned in the Red Sea, they say, the Egyptians *ungughmetsan.*

"Such is the extreme to which their zeal has led our brethren of the American and Foreign Bible So-

say that the Greek word rendered baptism means immersion only, then we must wage war with the *Greek classics*, and *many other Greek writers*, for in Homer we read of "a lake baptized with the blood of a frog;" and of "a rock baptized with the blood of a stag." Now whilst both the lake and the rock might have been *sprinkled*, or *stained*, with this blood, it is certain, that by it neither could have been *immersed*. In the Septuagint, Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been *baptized**

ciety. How ridiculous the sound of all this must be in the ear of the Armenians! How must it tend to injure the cause of our common Protestantism among that already too superstitious people! Think how it would sound, if the new Baptist version in English were to read "Go, teach all nations, *drowning* them &c."—or "He that believeth and is *drowned* shall be saved!" Would it help the matter that the word *baptized* should be put in a parenthesis, along side of *drowned*, in the way of a commentary upon the impious mistranslation?—and why then should this sectarianism make free with God's holy word in a foreign tongue, after a fashion which it would be ashamed and afraid to follow in our own language?

I am yours very truly."

* Βαφη, a word of the same root. See Morel. Lex.

with the dews of Heaven. Now he may have been *sprinkled*, or *made wet* with the dews of heaven, but assuredly not *immersed;* for in immersion, the subject is applied to the element, and not the element to the subject. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the matter was entirely reversed, for the element was applied to the subject, and not the subject to the element; and yet, although he was only *sprinkled* or *made wet*, εβαφη with the dew, he was said to have been *baptized*. In Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 25, speaking of one who had been ceremonially purified, after having touched a dead body, we have these words, βαπτιζομενος απὸ νεκρου, which may be rendered, was *purified* from the dead, but certainly not immersed. And, however strange it may be, Taylor, the editor of Calmet's Dictionary, quotes some eighty examples, in which the word in question implies *less* than immersion; and in most of them means no more than sprinkling, moistening, pouring, or staining.* How certain

* See Peter's "Sprinkling the only mode of baptism."

it is then that the word rendered baptism *has* more meanings than one! But again, if we say that baptism means immersion, and immersion only, we must *wage war with the sacred Scriptures.* This is a heavy charge, and I would not dare to make it, if the evidence were not clear as a sun-beam. And this is the strong point; for if all lexicons, and all the classics, and all uninspired writers were against us, it should not and would not have any influence with me in fixing the meaning of the word, if the sacred Scriptures should show that it is used in another sense. And to prove that this is the fact, I adduce the following examples. 1. In Heb. ix. 10, Paul uses this phraseology, διαφοροις βαπτισμοις, *divers baptisms.* Now, if there was only one mode of baptism, why does the apostle use the *plural* number *baptisms*, and connect with it the word *divers*, which denotes variety? Should I take you into a room promising to show you *divers* beautiful objects, and then show you only *one*, what would you think of my promise? Or should I invite you into an orchard, and tell you that I would treat you to

divers fruits, and I should place before you only one kind of fruit, would you not be much disappointed? The very phrase then *divers baptisms* evidently bespeaks more kinds than one. But to what does the apostle allude, when he uses the phrase "divers baptisms?" This may easily be ascertained by comparing the whole verse with a parallel passage, found in Mark vii. 4. Paul says, "Which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings (Gr. baptisms), and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." The language of Mark is this, "And when they come from the market, except they wash, (or baptize,) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (Gr. baptism) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Here it appears that the reference unquestionably is to the *ablutions*, which were commonly practised amongst the Jews; and for which water-pots filled with water were always provided, and near the door. Hence this testimony touching the marriage in Cana of Galilee; "there were set there six water-

pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece." Now the Jews, when they returned from the market, invariably performed an act of purification at the water-pots. This, which is expressly called *baptism*, could not, I think, have been by *immersion*. And whilst the cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, may possibly have been immersed, it is pretty certain that the *tables* (or couches) of which Mark speaks were not, for we are informed that they were very cumbrous articles of furniture, being usually about twenty feet long, four feet wide, and four feet high; too large, I should suppose, to be conveniently immersed, especially in the water-pots just mentioned. Here, then, we find that certain things are in Scripture, said to have been baptized, which *could not have been immersed.*

The second Scripture example which I shall advance to prove that the word *to baptize* cannot, in every case, mean immersion, is this, Levit. xiv. 4: "Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and

clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip (or *baptize*) them and the living bird *in the blood of the bird that was killed.*" Now I ask, could the bird killed have had blood enough to make a pool sufficiently large and deep for *immersing all over* the living bird, together with the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop? And yet by the command of heaven, all these must be dipped or *baptized* in the blood of the single bird killed. Certainly then, according to the Scriptures, an object may be *baptized*, and yet not immersed.

Take another example, John xiii. 26, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped or *baptized* it. And when he had dipped the sop, (εμβάψας το ψωμίον) he gave it to Judas Iscariot." And again, Matt. xxvi. 23, "He that dippeth (ὁ εμβάψας) his hand with me in the dish." Now certainly there was no immersion *here*, for there was nothing

like a liquid used. The lamb was to be roasted, and this was to be eaten with bitter herbs made into a kind of paste, and a small piece of unleavened bread called a sop was *smeared* with it. The bringing of this piece of unleavened bread in contact with the roasted lamb, and the bitter herbs thus made into a kind of paste, is called *dipping*, or baptizing the sop. I repeat it, surely there is no *immersion* here.

But 3. we adduce those passages of Scripture which denominate *the influences of the Spirit baptism*, when there is nothing like immersion spoken of. Thus it is written: "I will be as the dew to Israel;" and again—"I will *pour* my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;" and again—"He shall *come down* as the rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth;" and again—"I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." These, and many similar passages of Scripture, unquestionably refer to the influences of the divine Spirit which should be vouchsafed to the church in gospel times; and are not these expressly denomi-

nated *baptism?* What said the blessed Saviour in his last interview with his disciples. "John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost* not many days hence." And when did this baptism take place? On the day of Pentecost. Then it was that the Spirit *descended*, and as an emblem of divine influences, cloven tongues like as of fire *sat* upon each of them. And what said Peter? "This is that which was spoken by Joel the prophet, And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh." This *pouring out* of the Spirit is evidently the *baptism of the Holy Ghost* which the Saviour promised; and if he denominates this pouring out of the Spirit *baptism*, who are we, that we should contend against such authority? Again, John the Baptist says, "I baptize you with water, but he that comes after me is mightier than I. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;" and in what way shall he do this? The prophet Isaiah tells us distinctly, "He shall sprinkle many nations." Isa. lii. 15. Thus, that baptism which

comes from Christ, and the Holy Spirit which he promised to send, is represented by *pouring* and *sprinkling*, but in no solitary case by *immersion*. So far then from the Scripture limiting baptism to immersion, it may be seriously questioned whether it gives any countenance to that mode at all. And this more particularly as it inverts the order of heaven's plan, applying the subject to the element, when, if the manner of the baptism of the Holy Ghost be respected, the element is to be applied to the subject, and not the subject to the element. The word baptism, then, having most manifestly more meanings than one, of course no simple precept to baptize can of itself designate any one mode. But it may be said, if no command can restrict baptism to immersion, this is done by certain scriptural examples and allusions. We will now notice some of the most noted.

1. The case of John baptizing *in* Jordan, Matt. iii. 6. The preposition, *ἐν*, here rendered *in*, has a variety of significations. Besides *in* and *into*, which it sometimes means, it also means *by*. Thus, 1 John v. 6, Jesus

came not *by* ἐν, water only, but, ἐν, *by* water and blood. Surely not *in* water and blood! Sometimes it is properly translated *with*. Thus, Mark i. 8, He shall baptize you ἐν, *with* the Holy Ghost. Surely not *in* the Holy Ghost! Again, it sometimes means *at*. Thus, Eph. i. 20, Whence he raised him from the dead, and set him, ἐν, *at* his own right hand. Of course it cannot mean *in* his own right hand! Now, I would ask, how can a preposition, which has so many meanings, fix the meaning of the word *baptism*, which, as we have already clearly shown, has, itself, a variety of significations? Moreover, if the true rendering of ἐν be *at* in Ephesians, why may it not also mean *at* in Matthew? I have thought much on the subject, and, to me, it seems almost certain that John did not immerse: 1. Because this would not have been in accordance with the mode of purifying prescribed in Leviticus; and to which there is evidently an allusion in John iii. 25. 2. Because if "all Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," were baptized of John, confessing

their sins, as it is affirmed, or even one third part of them, he could not have done it in less than three years, allowing him to be operating six hours each day, and allowing one minute for each to confess his sins and be baptized. 3. Because if John immersed, he did not do what Christ did, for, although it was said of Christ, that he baptized more disciples than John, yet the prophets, who foretold of him the smallest things, never predicted that he should *immerse*, but *did predict that he should sprinkle.* Is. lii. 15. The natural conclusion, then, is, that John did not *immerse:* and this is the more likely as it was also in accordance with another Old Testament prophecy, referring to New Testament times—I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. I believe that John, standing *by* the river Jordan — at the water's edge, performed the work of purification spoken of in John iii. 25, not by *immersion*, but by *sprinkling*. Who can affirm that he did not?*

* The following note, which is abridged from another work, may cast some light on this point.

The purpose of John's baptism was peculiar. It

2. The case of John's baptizing *in Enon, because there was much water there.* Enon was not a river, it was only a town, or place where there were, πολλα ὑδατα, not "*much*

continued only during John's ministry, and it was restricted to the Jews. What form of words he used we know not. We can only conjecture them from Acts xix. 4. His baptism was superseded by the commission Christ gave to his disciples after his resurrection, if not before. Matt. xxviii. 19. The rite appears to have been appointed for the whole nation without discrimination of age, sex, character or condition. Matt. iii. 5; Mark i. 4, 5; Luke iii. 12, 14, 21; Matt. xxi. 31, 32. It was in fact preparatory to the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus among that people, (Acts xix. 4,) just as the baptism by Moses was preparatory to the giving of the law by which the people came into new covenant relations with Jehovah. Exod. xix. 5; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2; 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. How John baptized we are not expressly informed; but we have no more reason to suppose that he dipped those who came to him, one and all, small and great, beneath the waters of Jordan, than we have to believe that Moses dipped the whole congregation of Israel in the cloud, or in the sea. The Syriac translator uses the word *amad* for baptize, which primarily signifies to stand, because, says Schindler (Lex. Pent.) "those who were baptized *stood.*" *Stabant enim qui baptizabantur.* (See Cas-

water" (singular number), but "*many waters*" (plural), that is, *many streams*, or *springs;* and if immense multitudes attended upon his preaching; there were other purposes for which many streams, or (if it be

telli Lex.) The baptism of Moses was introductory to the Levitical economy, as it was soon to be established over that people. The baptism of John came at the end of that economy, and was introductory to the ministry of Christ. Hence John was to *forerun* the Messiah, not to labour cotemporaneously with him. John i. 27; Matt. iv. 12; Acts xiii. 25. We do not read that John baptized after Jesus began to preach, nor that any other baptized by John's authority or commission. No argument therefore can be fairly drawn from John's baptism which cannot be drawn from the baptism of Moses. But if it be insisted upon still, then it must be conceded that infants should be baptized as well as adults; because John's baptism had respect to the whole nation, as well as Moses', and there was the same reason for baptizing all classes and descriptions of persons in the one case, as in the other. Properly speaking, however, John's baptism was a legal rite, or a rite which had respect to a people living under an economy of law, and was soon superseded; whereas the baptism of Christ was appointed as a seal of the covenant of grace to continue unto the end.

insisted upon) *much water*, would be vastly more needed than for the mere matter of immersion. Culinary purposes would require much; and even for *drinking*, much would be required for themselves and their cattle. Besides, they were in the habit of performing daily ablutions, or purifications, and their "water-pots" were, probably, not taken along with them. When our Methodist brethren are selecting some place for a great camp-meeting, *many streams* or *much water* would be a strong recommendation with them, although it is well known that they usually baptize by sprinkling, and not immersion. *Much water!* John, as we have said, needed much water for the accommodation of the multitudes that waited upon his ministry, but he did not need "much water" half so much for the purpose of *immersing* his disciples; for one fountain, or pool, would have answered as well as one thousand. Besides, let it be remembered, that John seems to have gone from Bethabara, the main ford of Jordan, to Enon; that is, he went from the *river* Jordan to *Enon*,

a place where there was no river. If much water for the purpose of immersion was the thing in view, why did John leave the river Jordan? Was there not water enough in that river? Certainly there was water enough in Jordan for immersion, but it may not have been so well adapted to the accommodation of his hearers; and therefore in selecting Enon, because there was much water there, immersion could have had nothing to do with the matter whatever. This case, then, need not, must not, be relied upon to prove the correctness of immersion, and immersion only, for it has no strength, and will assuredly prove no better than a broken reed. But,

3. There is the *example of Christ;* was *he* not immersed? I am strongly inclined to think that he was not; for, as we have shown, sprinkling was the mode prescribed for purifying under the Levitical economy; and John seems to have followed that example.* But is it not said, "When Jesus was

* The Syriac version (which was probably the first made) may suggest to the learned reader an argu-

baptized, he went up straightway *out of* the water?" So it is in our translation, but what is the Greek word here translated *out of?* It is απο, the very word which is found

ment on this point. If he will turn to Matt. iii. 13, 14, in that version, he will find του βαπτισθηναι (to be baptized) in vs. 13, rendered d'neamad, and the same words in verse 14 rendered ethamed. Both are from the root (amad) which signifies, both in Hebrew and Syriac, *he stood erect.* (Schind. Lex., Castelli Lex., Taylor's Concord. *ad voc.*) The figurative sense (baptize) arises from the fact *that standing was the posture assumed* for receiving the rite. Hence, in Acts xxii. 16, Ananias is represented as saying to Saul, αναστας βαπτισαι (Syr. kum amad,) *arising,* (standing, having arisen) be baptized, i. e. *put yourself in the posture for receiving baptism,* (for the word βαπτισαι is in the middle voice.) The same kind of phraseology occurs in Acts ix. 18. (αναστας εβαπτισθη). This explains the remark of Schindler before cited, *Stabant enim qui baptizabantur.* But to return to Matt iii. 13, 14: Bearing this sense in mind—neamad is in the Fut. Peal (3. s. m.) which denotes an active intransitive signification corresponding somewhat to the middle voice in Greek; (comp. Acts xxii. 16.) whereas ethamed (the word in vs. 14) is in Ethpeel, or as we should say, in the passive voice. Why the translator should have

in the seventh verse of this chapter, in this sentence, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee (απο) *from* the wrath to come?" Is not the meaning here very plainly

rendered the same Greek word (βαπτισθηναι) in these consecutive verses into different *voices* in Syriac—the one having an active intransitive signification, and the other by a word having a purely passive signification, it may be difficult to explain. But it seems very clear that he did not understand the word βαπτισθηναι to signify *immerse* in verse 13, for whatever of action the word *d'neamad* expresses or implies, it ascribes it to the Lord Jesus, and not to John.

But however this may be, neither the fact nor the form of our Lord's baptism is properly applicable to this question, owing to the peculiar relations he sustained—for observe: although he was baptized *by* John, he was not baptized with *the baptism of* John. John's was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, (Luke iii. 3; Acts xix. 4; Mark i. 4,) and was attended with the confession of sins. Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 5. But Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Heb. vii. 26. John could not have exhorted him, as he did the people, to believe on him *who should come after him*, (Acts xix. 4,) for that would have been an exhortation to believe in himself. John's baptism did not have the effect of preparing the nation

from, and not *out of?* And again, in Matt. xxvii. 40, we have these words, "If thou be the Son of God, come down (απο) *from* the cross." It is the very same word;

to believe in Christ; it was not an *opus operatum*, for the nation afterwards with great unanimity rejected Christ; and that result was, perhaps, the thing chiefly signified, or typically foretold, by our Lord submitting himself to be baptized by John. Our Lord afterwards said, (Luke xii. 50,) "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am straitened until it be accomplished;" alluding no doubt to his sufferings on the cross. See also Matt. xx. 22, 23; Mark x. 38, 39. John's baptism of the people had respect to their existing covenant relations, as still the subjects of law; whereas the baptism of our Lord must have had respect to foreseen events, and the covenant of grace, which was to be established by or through his sufferings and death. There is therefore no point of analogy between the baptism of the people by John, and the baptism of Christ by John. John himself plainly saw this when "he forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Matt. iii. 14. We are therefore to consider this act of our Lord in presenting his body to John for baptism, (like his act of offering up the same body on the cross,) as an act *by itself* proper to no other person, and without a

and now, I ask, would it be proper to render it, come down *out of* the cross? There are very many cases of a similar kind, where the word, as all admit, may very properly be rendered *from*, and why then not in the passage before us? It will then read, "When Jesus was baptized he went up

precedent; and were it even proved that our Lord was baptized by way of immersion, yet it would not follow, either that John baptized the people generally in that way, or that the apostles under their second commission followed that example. Indeed, it does not appear that there was any witness of this action of our Lord, excepting only John (the Baptist) and the Holy Spirit. Matt. iii. 13—17; Mark i. 9—12; Luke iii. 21; John i. 32, 33. See Scott's remarks on Matt. iii. 16, 17. It is evident, too, that John did not understand his commission, (John i. 33,) as comprising the act of baptizing the Lord himself; for if he had, why should he have refused, or even hesitated to perform it? But this difficulty was instantly removed by the express command of his Lord; which we must understand as a new and distinct commission given for this single act and purpose, or we must believe that John (though filled with the Holy Ghost, and acting continually under his inspirations,) did not *fully* comprehend the extent of his commission.

straightway *from* the water." But, suppose that Christ, to "fulfill all righteousness," to comply with all the requirements of that day, was immersed; does it follow that we also must comply with the same requirements of that day, and be immersed? Then, on the same principle, *circumcision* is still binding, for Christ was circumcised; and we must keep the *passover*, for Christ kept it; and we must observe the *Jewish Sabbath*, for Christ observed that also. Besides, as Christ was not baptized until he was thirty years of age, we must not be baptized until we have reached the same period. If the candidate for baptism be fifteen years of age, he is much too young to be baptized. If he be twenty, he must wait ten years longer; and if even twenty-eight, he must be patient, and wait still two years more. Moreover, if our baptism must in all respects be like that of Christ, *we must have no sins*, for he had no sin; and we must, by baptism, be set apart to the *priest's office;* for it was for this purpose he was baptized; hence, when he was asked, on a certain occasion, by

what authority he did certain things in the temple, he referred to John's baptism. How singular, then, it is, that any one should for a moment suppose that what Christ did, in this case, was ever intended as an example for us! He *ate* the *paschal supper*, must we eat the paschal supper? He observed the *Jewish Sabbath*, must we observe the Jewish Sabbath? He was *transfigured*, must we also be transfigured? He raised the dead, must we also raise the dead? He was crucified, must we also be crucified? We must follow Christ in whatever he intends that we should follow him but what was peculiar to himself, and the requirements of the Levitical law at that time, was, of course, never designed for our imitation. Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment. But,

4. The case of *Philip and the eunuch* is thought strongly to favor the doctrine of restricting baptism to immersion. *I* think differently! But let us examine the case. The passage reads thus: "And as they went on their way, they came to a *certain*

water." How vague is this language! It is not said, a *river.* It could not be, for there is no river there! It may have been only a streamlet, or shallow pool, such as is common in the prairies of Texas. But to proceed: And the eunuch said, "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" This is just precisely what a traveller in similar circumstances would now say, if on his way to San Antonio he should come to the Cibolo, and see by the road side, what I have seen, a place scooped out by the hand of nature where travellers usually water their horses. And I am confirmed in the correctness of this opinion, by the fact, that the region through which the eunuch was passing is in the *south* country; is called "*desert;*" and in latitude, in soil, in climate, and face of the country, is very much the same as the region of the Cibolo, some sixteen miles east of San Antonio. What said he? "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" How natural this language, at the sight of *any* water, much or little! Observe! he had just been reading that prediction

concerning the Messiah—"He shall *sprinkle* many nations." "Of whom, says the eunuch, speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or some other? And Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." The eunuch, believing Christ to be the very Messiah predicted, desired as an evidence of his faith to be *sprinkled* in his name. "Not *sprinkled*," says one; "not *sprinkled!* but immersed!" How far fetched is this; and how unnatural! For neither in this prophecy, nor any other touching the Messiah, is it predicted that he should *immerse*, but that he should *sprinkle*. Of course, then, the eunuch expected to be *sprinkled*, and not *immersed;* hence he did not wait until he came to a river, but as soon as he saw water, *any* water, he immediately proposed to have the element applied to him in the mode and form predicted. But is it not said, They went down *into* the water? If the preposition εἰς, here employed, meant *in*, or *into*, and nothing else, the case would be settled. But, we can show that in many cases such a rendering would never answer.

For example, Matt. xviii. 29, And his fellow servant fell down, εἰς, *at* his feet. Surely neither *in* nor *into*. Again, see Matt. v. 1, And seeing the multitude he went up, εἰς, a mountain. This may be rendered *on* or *upon*, but certainly not literally either *in* or *into*. Again, Matt. xvii. 27, Go thou εἰς *to* the sea. Certainly the Saviour did not mean that Peter should go down literally *into* the sea! But there is a case stronger still; see John xx. 4, 5, So they ran both together, (Peter and John,) and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first εἰς *to* the sepulchre. Did Peter literally go *into* the sepulchre? What says the Evangelist? YET WENT HE NOT IN! In this case, it is expressly stated that the word means *to*, and not *into*. And, if I mistake not, it never, or rarely ever, means *in* or *into*, *except when reduplicated*. In the case of Philip and the Eunuch it is not reduplicated! Now, then, as it is said with regard to Peter and John, They both ran together, and that disciple did outrun Peter and came first εἰς *to* the sepulchre, *yet went he not* IN—so may we read the

passage in relation to Philip and the Eunuch, They both went down εἰς TO the water, *yet went they not* IN! But suppose they went literally *into* the water, this is no proof that the Eunuch was immersed; for, as the climate was warm, and the legs were usually bare, and no boots or shoes, but only sandals worn, it would have been no unpleasant thing, for this man of the sunny south, literally to have stepped into this "certain water," and in this way it would have been more convenient for Philip to have baptized him, by *sprinkling*, in the name of the Messiah in whom he believed; and according to the prophecy just read. But, do we not read, "When they came up *out* of the water?" This is our translation, but I think this translation of the word ἐκ, here employed, would not suit in many places. Take the following, Rom. i. 27, Herein is the righteousness of God revealed, ἐκ, not *out* of, surely, but *from*, faith to faith. Again, Matt. xii. 33, The tree is known, ἐκ, *from* its fruits. Would you read it, *out* of its fruits? Again, John x. 32, Many good works have I

shown you, ἐκ, *from* my Father. Not *out of* my Father. These are only a few of the passages which might be quoted, in which ἐκ means not *out of*, but *from*.

5. The case of *Paul's baptism*. And here I would remark that if even the eunuch was immersed, it is pretty clear and certain that Paul was not. Let us examine the matter. When, on his way to Damascus, breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, the Lord Jesus appeared to him in dazzling splendor. Struck down to the ground, this fierce persecutor heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me? And he trembling and astonished asked, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He was told he must go to Damascus, and he should there be told what he must do. Being led by the hand, he was taken to a certain house in Damascus. There he remained three days, and neither did eat nor drink. In these circumstances Ananias, divinely directed, comes to him and says, amongst other things, "And, now, why tar riest thou? Arise and be baptized;" and

forthwith, he arose and was baptized. Luke says, αναστας εβαπτίσθη, having stood up he was baptized. Was he baptized by *immersion?* I think not; for, in that case, there certainly would have been some such record as this: "And he arose and *went out* and was baptized in such a river, or stream." But there is no such record. It is simply this: "He arose and was baptized;" and it is added, "When he had received meat, he was strengthened." Now, as Paul must have been exceedingly weak, having been without meat or drink for three days, I should think that, had they taken him out to be immersed, common feelings of humanity would have suggested the propriety of giving him some refreshment first. It will not do to say, that as Paul had been miraculously converted, he might have been miraculously sustained; for we are expressly told that he was strengthened *after* he had eaten; and that was *after* he had been baptized. It is evident, then, that Paul was baptized, not in any river or pool, but in his own room. It may have been by *pouring* or *sprinkling*, but certainly not

by *immersion*. For my part, I have not the faintest idea that Paul was immersed; but if we restrict baptism to immersion, we must not only *think* that he was immersed, but be *positively sure* of it. That is, we must be positively sure of that which is altogether improbable. Again,

6. The case of the *jailer and his household* is familiar to us all. Converted in prison at a midnight hour we are told, "He was baptized, *he and all his straightway*." Now I would ask, is it likely that Paul and Silas, bruised and beaten as they were, would have gone out to a river at the dead hour of the night? And is it at all likely that waking up the family of the jailer, they would have hurried them, dear little children and all, from their comfortable beds and midnight slumbers into the cold waters of a flowing stream? Believe this who can! But we must not only *believe* it, we must *know* it, or we *cannot* restrict baptism to immersion. No! they were baptized, as we have full reason to believe, in prison; and there was no river there. But is it not said, "He brought

them out?" Yes, but let it be remembered that they had been thrust into the *inner* prison. Out of this *inner* prison, unquestionably, they were brought into the court, or more spacious apartment. But, says the objector, is it not also said that after the jailer and his household had been baptized, "he brought Paul and Silas into his own house?" This is not denied, but who does not know that it is a very common thing for prisons to be so constructed, that there is a communication between the apartment occupied by the keeper of the prison, and the courts, and cells of the prison? And that this must have been the case at Philippi is evident from what follows: "In the morning the magistrates sent the serjeants saying, Let these men go." And Paul said, "They have beaten us uncondemned being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out *privily?* Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out." Now, if Paul and Silas had themselves that very night gone out *privily*, would this language have been correct? Nay more, would it not

have been a clear breach of official duty in the jailer to have taken them out of the inclosure? I believe that the jailer and his household were baptized in prison. Who can say that they were not? I believe that they were *not* immersed. Who can positively say that they were? But this must be affirmed, or baptism cannot be limited to immersion. But again there is

7. The case of *Cornelius and his household.* The Bible account of the matter is this: "The Holy Ghost fell on them that heard the word, and they of the circumcision, which believed were astonished as many as came with Peter, because on the gentiles also was *poured* out the gift of the Holy Ghost. "Then," said Peter, "remembered I the word of the Lord Jesus. John, indeed, baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Observe! It was when the Holy Ghost was *poured out* upon Cornelius and his household, that Peter was *reminded* of the *promised baptism* of the Holy Ghost, which was received on the day of Pentecost, and *then* it was he said, "Who can

forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Having had the Spirit *poured out* upon them, let water be brought, and poured out upon them as an emblem of this spiritual baptism. How natural is this interpretation! Notice the language of Peter, "Then *remembered* I." Now, how the baptism of the Holy Ghost administered on this occasion by *pouring*, could remind the apostle of water baptism by *immersion*, cannot very well be conceived, for the memory is usually quickened by *resemblances*, not by *differences* or *dissimilarities*. And here I will make two remarks. *First.* The Scriptures invariably represent the element applied to the subject, and not the subject to the element. Certainly this is true at any rate, with regard to the main baptism—the baptism of the Spirit; and why should it not be so with regard to *water* baptism, which is but its emblem? And that water baptism is an emblem of spiritual baptism, is evident from the manner in which they are spoken of as connected together, and also by this well known language of the

apostle: "We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body." My second remark is this: *Wherever* persons were converted in apostolic times, *there*—in the same place, they were baptized; whether in the city or in the wilderness; whether in the private chamber or on the public highway; whether in the prison, or by the river side. Yes, there is no account of a single individual after conversion, having been taken out to any river, or pool, or water course of any kind to be baptized! Wherever they were converted, in that very place, on that very spot they were baptized; and it would seem just in the way which was most convenient, and which required no change of raiment. And here I am reminded of the words of our Saviour to Peter, who was willing to be washed all over, in token of his thorough and devoted attachment to his Master. "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." What is the idea here presented? Simply this: that a person may in the judgment of heaven, be "clean every whit," without the washing of the whole

body; a part (by a divine synechdoche) will do for the whole. As Paul speaks of *divers baptisms*, we would not contend for any one particular mode. If only the heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience, it matters not much whether the body be washed with, or in pure water. We must beware how we think more of the sign, than the thing signified, lest we fall into the error of those who make *outward* ordinances every thing, and who would substitute baptism for regeneration. And here I would remark, that certain churches in Kentucky and elsewhere, once flourishing, now nearly broken up, may serve as a beacon to warn others of the danger of laying undue stress upon immersion, and of unchurching those Christian brethren who conscientiously prefer another mode.

8. The last case which I shall mention is that of the *three thousand that were converted and baptized on the day of Pentecost.* These were all baptized on one day, but were they immersed? I think not! I think that they *could not* have been; for there was neither time nor place for immersing so great a multitude.

There was not *time!* Let us look at the matter. The hour of prayer was nine o'clock. How long the disciples continued in prayer before the Spirit descended upon them in cloven tongues, like as of fire, we know not—say one hour; if so, then it was not until ten o'clock, that it began to be noised abroad, that something remarkable had happened. How long it took the multitude to assemble, and how long all the apostles spoke before Peter began his sermon, I know not, and how long was the sermon of this ardent apostle, I cannot tell; but one thing I do know, that after recording a pretty long address of Peter, the evangelist adds: "And with *many other words* did he testify and exhort." We have reason to believe that, considering the ardor of this apostle, and the peculiarly exciting circumstances of the case, his sermon must have been *very* long! And then much time must have been consumed in discriminating between those who were converted, and those who "mocked"—and, as those who were baptized, were baptized *confessing their sins.* I think *this*, also, must have occupied much time; and then, if immersed,

surely it would require some considerable time for each man to go to his own home, to procure the requisite change of raiment; for we cannot suppose that they would be willing to go dripping wet through the streets of Jerusalem; and then would it not have required much time to find out and secure proper places to be immersed, if there were such places, and such places could be obtained? Now, by the time that all these things could have been done, surely the day must have been far spent; indeed, too far spent, I think, for three thousand persons to have been immersed by the twelve apostles; even if aided by the seventy disciples, concerning the presence of whom, however, on this occasion, no mention whatever is here made. But as there was not *time*, neither was there any *place* for immersing so great a multitude. *Where*, I ask, could they have been immersed? Not in the brook Cedron, for that was a very shallow stream, and oftentimes entirely dry. Not in the *Pool of Bethesda*, for that was the place where the sick lay, waiting for the moving of the waters. Not in the *upper pool of Gihon*,

for that was covered; nor in the *lower pool of Gihon*, nor in the *pool of Siloam*, nor in the pool of *Hezekiah*, for over these the enemies of Christ had full control. As for *Solomon's pool*, from that they were some seven or eight miles distant. Tell me not that *baths* were common in Jerusalem. These baths were in the houses of the rich, and we know full well that very few of them were disposed to show any favour to the disciples of the crucified Nazarene. The fact is, that if what I have gathered from books, and those who have sojourned in Jerusalem, be correct, there was no place in or about that city where the pentecostal converts could have been immersed. I feel confident, therefore, that they were not taken out to any river, or pool, or bath to be immersed, but like Paul in his chamber, and Cornelius in his house, and the jailer in his prison, and the eunuch on the highway, and Lydia at the sea-side, and John's disciples on the banks of Jordan, on the *very spot* where they were converted, there were they baptized by *sprinkling*, or some other

of the modes of purification pointed out distinctly in the book of Leviticus, and embraced in Paul's "divers baptisms." It seems to me a matter reduced almost to an absolute certainty, that the pentecostal converts *were not* immersed, and *could not* have been. Yet if we limit baptism to immersion, we must not only *think* that they were immersed, but we must be sure of it; that is, we must be sure of that of which no man on the face of the earth, as it seems to me, can be sure. How utterly unreasonable, then, is it to say that baptism is immersion, and immersion only; and on this baseless assumption to unchurch more than four-fifths of the Christian world! This is a serious matter. It shows no proper respect for the opinions of others. It rends the seamless robe of Christ. It erects barriers where none should exist, and cuts off from brotherly fellowship and Christian communion those who are our brethren in the Lord—those who are bought with the same precious blood, sanctified by the same divine Spirit, members of the same household of faith, and who, with the

truly pious in every land, are all passing through one beauteous gate to one eternal home. "Will you not let me commune with you next Sabbath?" said an old and faithful servant of Christ, of another persuasion, to a church, many of whom were his own spiritual children—"will you not let me commune with you next Sabbath?" "No, we cannot," was the reply, "the rules of our church forbid." "Then," said he, with touching simplicity, "I will go and tell my Heavenly Father that you will not let me come with you to his table." The appeal was powerful; the argument was a strong one; it flashed conviction; it set all things aright; and, as the story goes, the next Sabbath the good old man was found seated very lovingly with his spiritual children at the table of their common Lord. But some tell us that close communion is a matter of *consistency;* that immersion is the only valid baptism; and that those who have not been immersed have not been baptized, and therefore must not be admitted to the table of the Lord. This puts us in possession of a new and powerful argument, which

is calculated to demolish the whole system of the immersionist; for the point to which the immersion principle leads is so completely at war with the very spirit of our religion, and the best feelings of the pious heart, that this very thing proves the whole system wrong. At any rate, the conclusion to which the immersion principle brings us is so unchristian-like and incredible, there must be an error—I repeat it, there must be an error somewhere!*

* Baptism is emblematical of the Holy Spirit's work in this world upon the believer, and there is no warrant in scripture for confining its signification to any particular *part* of his work *exclusively of other parts*. This work begins with convincing him of sin, (John xvi. 8; Eph ii. 1; Acts xxvi. 18,) and ends with presenting him in his redeemed and immortal body (Rom. viii. 11,) before the presence of his Lord's glory with exceeding joy. Jude 24. As *a rite* it has, in itself and independently of the Spirit's power, no more efficacy than the clay with which our Lord anointed the eyes of the blind man. John ix. 6. Hence it is always spoken of in connection with the operations of the Spirit. John iii. 5; Mark xvi. 16; Comp. with Eph. ii. 8; Col. ii. 12; Titus iii. 5. Our Baptist brethren will concede that the Holy Spirit

We have shown, as we think conclusively, that there is no precept nor example in all the Scriptures which limits baptism to immersion. But, as a last resort, certain allusions

does not *begin* his work in behalf of the redeemed *at the resurrection* of their bodies from the grave. They believe as well as we, that the Holy Spirit convinces of sin, enlightens and renews the mind, (Rom. xii. 2,) engrafts into Christ, imparts true faith, sanctifies the soul, converts the body of the believer, so to speak into a living temple, (1 Cor. vi. 19,) and seals him (body, soul, and spirit) unto the day of redemption. Eph. iv. 30. In many cases he carries on this work through many years, giving daily guidance, strength, and every needed grace. And when the body of the believer drops into the ground, he still watches over even the sleeping dust, waiting as it were to gather and glorify it, at the revelation of the Lord from heaven. But for all this *previous* work (according to their view,) there is no appointed emblem. And why not? Is it not all *one* work? Does not the beginning of it infallibly ensure the completion of it in the perfect redemption and glorification of its subject? Phil. i. 6; Rom. viii. 29, 30. Can anything short of almighty power even begin it, sustain it, or carry it on during the life of the believer? Is it not as easy for the Holy Spirit to gather and glorify the scattered dust of a man in a new and incor-

in the New Testament are relied upon. We will now notice some of the most prominent ones:

1. Romans vi. 3. "As many of us as were

ruptible form as to renew his soul? *A priori*, then, may we not say, it was as fitting and proper to appoint an emblem suitable to represent the *beginning*, as the ending of such a work? Nay; as our Lord *did not prescribe* any particular *form*, is it unreasonable to suppose he designed to allow his apostles to adapt the form either to the beginning or to the end of the Spirit's redeeming work, or to both? Adopting for a moment this supposition, it was quite natural for the apostles, in view of the events of the day of Pentecost, to *adjust* the *form* of the rite to the *beginning* as to the consummation of the Holy Spirit's work. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit would suggest the outpouring or sprinkling of water. Acts xi. 15, 16; ii. 16, 17, 33; Isaiah xliv. 3. This form would imply all that immersion may be supposed more significantly to set forth: for the Holy Spirit will certainly deliver from the power of hell and the grave the bodies of all those whose souls he hath renewed in this life, and none others. Phil. i. 6; Rom. viii. 29, 30; xi. 23.

There is another idea of great importance on this question. The apostles knew that believers shall not all die and sleep in the grave, although

baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." Is Christ's death intended to be here represented by baptism? I should think not, for Christ's death was by *crucifix-*

all believers will be changed in their bodies as well as souls. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Phil. iii. 21. Now in regard to such as shall not die, baptism by immersion does not so significantly set forth the work of the Holy Spirit in descending upon them and changing their bodies, as the outpouring of water. Such will not be unclothed and raised from the grave, but clothed upon; and consequently the greater or closer analogy to the thing signified, which is supposed to be furnished by immersion, fails in respect to these. It fails also in respect to all those believers whose bodies shall have been burned or devoured by wild beasts, or otherwise have been deprived of burial; and who can say how numerous this company will be? Let it be conceded, however, for the sake of argument, that baptism by immersion does more significantly represent the resurrection of the believer's body at the last day, than sprinkling or pouring. Its greater or more apt significancy is certainly confined to those who shall actually die, and whose bodies shall have been buried. On the other hand, baptism by pouring or sprinkling more aptly and significantly sets forth the beginning and progress of the Holy Spirit's work upon the soul of the believer in this life, which the apostle calls

ion, and what resemblance is there between crucifixion and immersion? None at all. This allusion, then, can hardly serve to restrict baptism to immersion.

2. "Therefore we are buried with him, by baptism, into death." These words are in

his first fruits, (Rom. viii. 23); the enjoyment of which he assures us justifies the confident expectation of the eternal redemption and glorification of the body. Rom. viii. 29; xxx. 23; Phil. i. 6; John i. 12; 1 John iii. 2. And besides its greater or more apt significancy, it extends to those classes of persons just mentioned, who may have been deprived of burial, or who may be actually alive at the Lord's coming at the last day.

It is admitted on all hands that had *the form* of the rite been positively prescribed, it would have been essential; whether that form were by sprinkling, by pouring, or by immersion. The argument, therefore, is directed simply against the inferential arguments or conclusions of those who would make a *particular* form *essential*, where none was prescribed, and that too in cases where other forms significantly and strikingly set forth essential parts of the same one great work of the Holy Spirit. Such being the state of the question, the doctrine of immersionists is a new precept, and a requirement to which neither our Lord nor his apostles gave their sanction.

immediate connection with the preceding, already quoted, and as in the one so in the other, we believe that there is no reference to the *mode* of baptism whatever, but to something vastly more important, even to the spiritual change which takes place in regeneration, of which water baptism is but the visible sign or emblem. But, if it be insisted upon that *the mode* is referred to—be it so. But let it be remembered that the apostle in the very same connection, speaks not only of our being "*buried*," but also "*crucified*" with Christ. Now if the term *buried* designates immersion as one mode of baptism, the term *crucified* must denote *another* mode, and this would be death and the grave to the idea that baptism can be lawfully administered only in one way. I repeat it, in all these figures there is no reference whatever to the mode of water baptism, but to the effect of spiritual baptism, causing us to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness. But if it be still insisted upon, be it so. It only serves to prove our point; for after all, how is a dead man buried?

It is not by being put down into a grave, but by having *earth poured in upon him!* This passage, then, so much relied upon, and which has caused our brethren, as I suspect, to misapprehend the very nature and design of the ordinance of baptism—this very passage, I say, if it has any bearing upon the mode of baptism at all, proves that pouring is the true mode of baptism, and not *immersion.* Surely, then, it will never answer to adduce this passage to prove that baptism should be *restricted* to immersion.*

* The reader observes, the argument is not directed against the validity of baptism by immersion, but only against those who deny that any other form is valid. It is not denied that baptism in ancient times was performed by immersion of the body, wholly or in part, as well as by pouring or sprinkling. Schindler (Lex. Pentag. page 686,) cites the Talmud to the effect, that whoever was received into the congregation of Israel, was circumcised, *baptized* and made an oblation. The baptism (he adds) consisted in the proselyte's sitting in water up to the neck long enough to learn some of the precepts of the law, difficult or easy. But even this baptism, (although perhaps one of those things grievous to be borne, to

3. "They were all baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." What! Immersed into Moses? This would be strange language. But to proceed—were all baptized in the cloud and the sea; were they *immersed* in the *cloud?* This could not have been, for the cloud passed over and went before them, so that baptism by the cloud could have been only by *pouring* or sprinkling. Were they immersed into the *sea?* No! for that was made to retire and stand as a wall on either side, so that baptism by the sea could only have been by its spray sprinkled upon them. Now, then, whilst by the sea the children of Israel may have been baptized by *sprinkling*, and by the cloud, both by *pouring* and *sprinkling;* by neither could they have been baptized by immersion. Pharaoh and his host were immersed, for we are told that *they* sank as lead in the deep

which our Lord refers in Matt. xxiii. 4,) did not consist in the immersion of the whole body. If this form of the rite was in vogue in the days of the apostles, it is certain they did not feel bound to adopt it.

waters; but the children of Israel were not immersed, for we are expressly informed that *they* passed through on *dry land* and dry *shod*. The fact is, the children of Israel were the only ones *not* immersed. They who were immersed were drowned. In the lxxvii. Psalm light is thrown upon the subject, and referring to this very thing the Psalmist tells us precisely *how* the children of Israel were baptized when passing through the Red Sea; "The clouds *poured out water*." They were rained upon. So it appears that they were baptized not by *immersion*, but by pouring. This passage then is rather an unfortunate one to prove that baptism means immersion, and immersion only.

4. "*One baptism.*" By reference to the context, it will be seen that this phrase, "one baptism," has no reference to water baptism at all, but to the main baptism—the baptism of the Spirit. The influences of the Spirit descending and resting upon the heart, we know, are frequently called baptism, and spoken of as the *main baptism;* and now to say that this phrase, "one baptism," means

immersion, and that this *water* baptism is the one main and only baptism, is to assume a position which I think very few would be willing to take. *One baptism!* Unquestionably no baptism can claim such pre-eminence but the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and this is frequently represented as administered by *pouring* and sprinkling, but in no single case by immersion. This passage then cannot, I think, *limit* baptism to immersion.

Our argument is now closed. I *object* to the doctrine which limits baptism to immersion, because the original word rendered baptism has different significations, and therefore cannot be made to have only one meaning. I *object*, because the baptism of the Spirit, of which water baptism is but an emblem, is represented under various forms, almost every form indeed but immersion. I *object*, because whilst no *precept*, or *example*, or *allusion* restricts the ordinance to any one mode, there are several which bespeak any other mode sooner than that of immersion. I *object*, because it has a tendency to make us attach more importance to outward forms

and ceremonies than to things more spiritual and divine.* I *object*, because it presents

* There can be but little doubt that the heresy of *baptismal regeneration* originated in the form of baptism by immersion. These words at first (as an attentive reading of the early Christian writers will show,) signified nothing more than *baptismal resurrection*, or a symbolical setting forth of the resurrection (redemption Rom. viii. 23, or regeneration) of the body; represented by the act of raising the body out of water after it had been immersed. So long as the phrase was thus understood, it appeared to be harmless; for no one could mistake the symbolical action for the future reality which it set forth. Every body could see that it was not a real resurrection, or a *real regeneration of the body*, because it was obviously the same mortal body, after it was taken out of the water, that it was before it was immersed. It was understood to be what in fact it was; and (in itself considered,) afforded no more evidence of a renewing or change of the mind, (Rom. xii. 2, which was the work of the Holy Spirit,) than it did of a change or regeneration of the body. It was indeed emblematical of *both*; because we know, that the Holy Spirit will never raise from the grave the body of any one to happiness and glory, without first regenerating his soul in this life. Besides the baptism was *a man's* act, although appointed to set forth a work, divine in all its parts, whether it had respect

at least a seeming conflict, between the God of grace and the God of providence, as if they were distinct beings, and one required what the other forbids. I *object*, because immersion is so peculiarly liable to circumstances calculated to destroy all solemnity,

to the body or the soul. This phraseology thus interpreted by the *action itself and by the absence of any visible effect*, was ignorantly, inadvertently, or artfully transferred by the Roman Church, to the form of baptism by pouring or sprinkling which was primarily designed to represent the *invisible operations* of the Holy Spirit (John iii. 8,) upon the soul of man in this life. Thus it came to be designated erroneously *a real work* (*opus operatum*) *on the soul*. It was impossible to confute this error by instant, ocular, palpable evidence—(as when it was applied to the whole man, body and soul) and in that way to prove that no real change was wrought by the rite on the soul; whereas in the original use and sense of the phraseology, (as applied to the body) it was impossible that such an error could arise. While, therefore, our Baptist brethren are orthodox on this point, they erroneously hold exclusively to that form of the rite, which gave occasion to this heresy, and thereby deprive themselves of the true, direct and surest means of confuting it· *viz.* by tracing its course backward to its source.

and disturb that calm and devotional frame of mind so desirable in administering and receiving so holy an ordinance. I *object*, because limiting baptism to immersion we are likely to think and speak lightly of the term sprinkling, a term made sacred by the prediction touching the Messiah, that "He should sprinkle many nations;" and by the promise of the purifying influences of the divine Spirit made in these words, "I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you and ye shall be clean," and made most sacred also, by the fact that the precious blood of Christ, in which the robes of all who reach heaven are to be washed and made white, is emphatically called "the blood of sprinkling!" And finally, I *object*, because if I embrace the doctrine that baptism means immersion, and immersion only, I must pronounce every other mode of baptism invalid. I must unchurch more than four-fifths of the Christian world. I must say that the great mass of those who have gone from earth to heaven, have gone there without having obeyed one of the last and great commands of our blessed Re-

deemer. Moreover, I must interpose a cruel barrier between myself and those whom in the Lord I love. If my dearest friends and nearest relations, if even my own parents, or my own children, or the wife of my bosom, be of another communion, though devout as martyrs, and pure as the angels of God, I must never meet them at the table of the Lord. I must be separated from them. I must stand aloof. Although I may have full evidence that the Master accepts them, yet *I* must not accept them! and if the spirits of just men, made perfect in heaven, are willing to commune with them in the church on high; I must not commune with them in the church below. This, in my judgment, seals the condemnation of the doctrine which limits baptism to immersion. It raises, as it were from the dead, that same old Diotrephes, concerning whom even the apostle John had occasion to say, "He receiveth us not, neither doth he receive the brethren, and forbideth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." Alas! how evident is it that we have not reached heaven yet!

O happy world! where Christians of every communion shall see "eye to eye," where they shall form one blessed family of love; and where, without a discordant note, they shall unite in one sweet song of praise; and with thrilling rapture shout, and through everlasting ages shout, "Unto him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father—unto him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly!

THE END.

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